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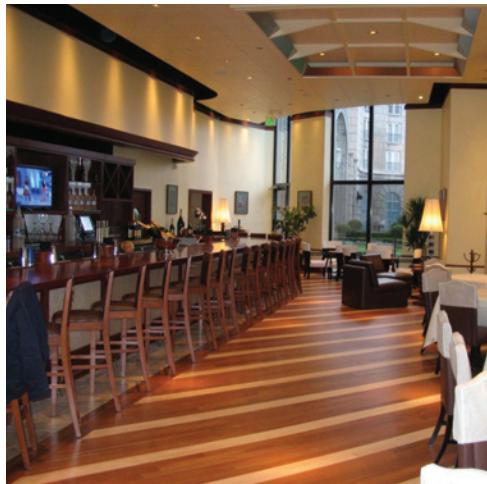
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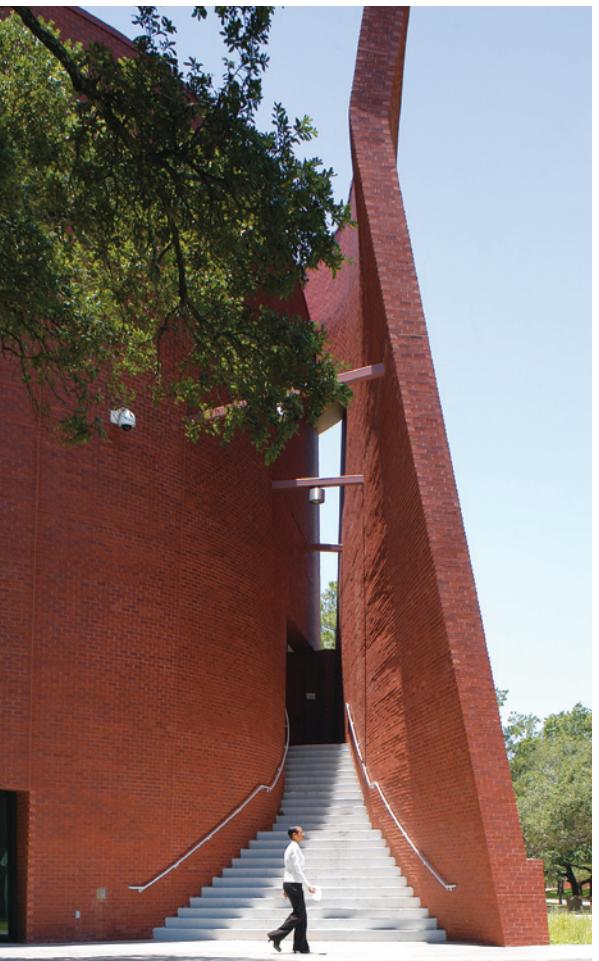
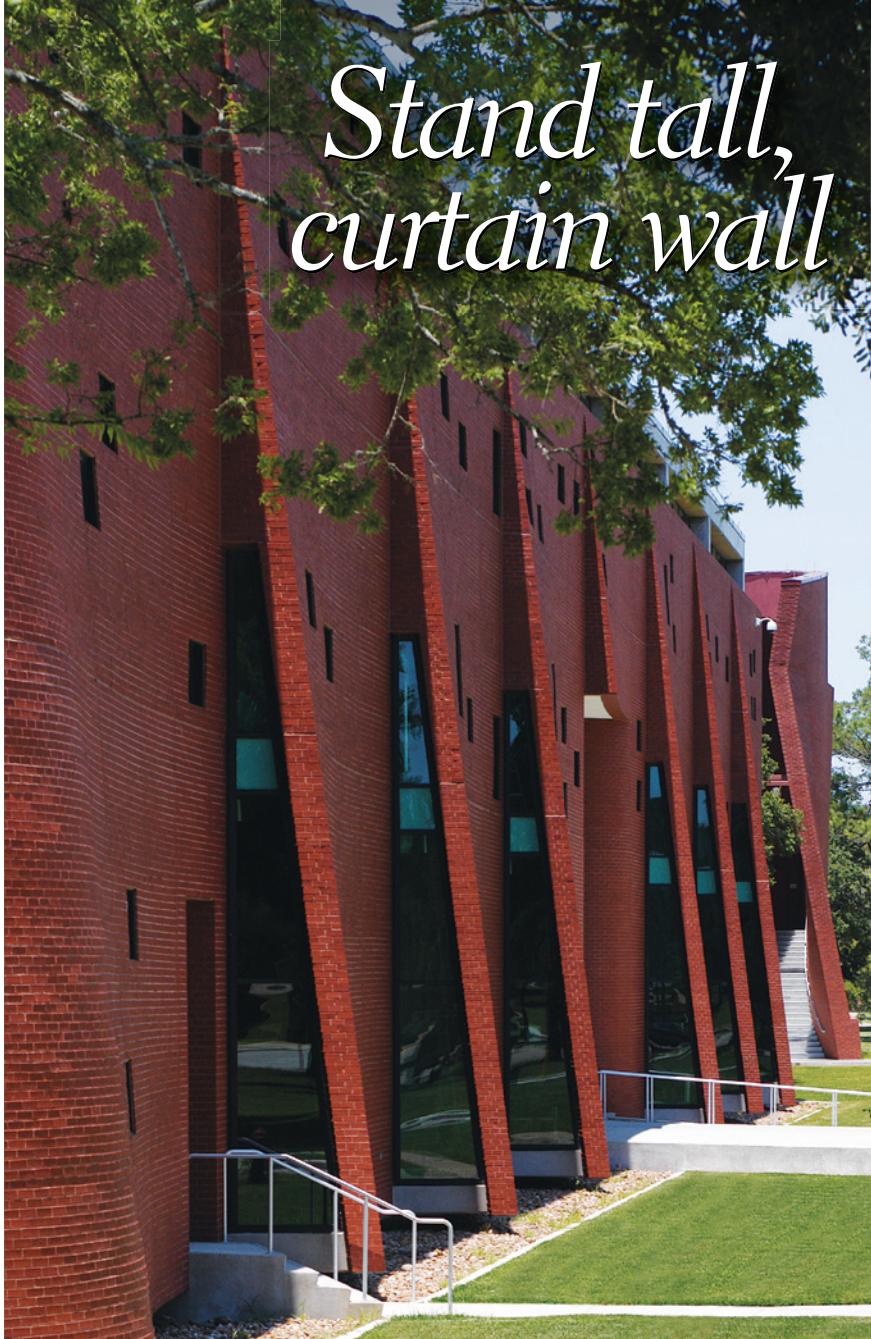
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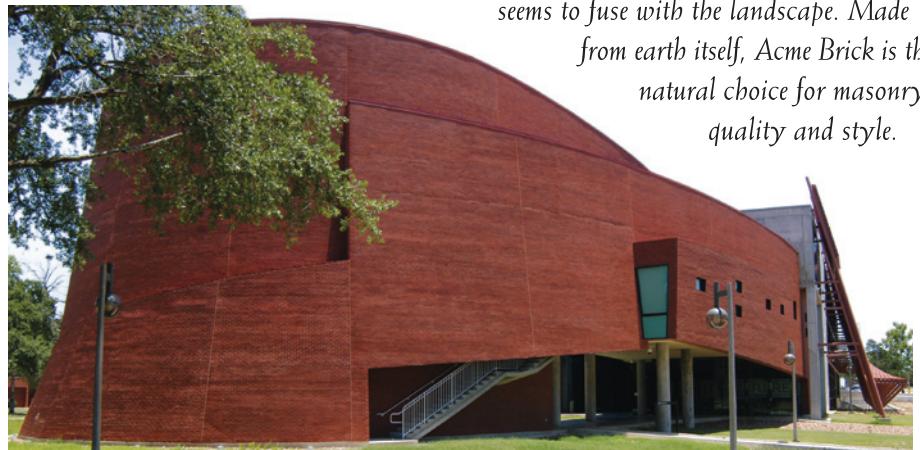


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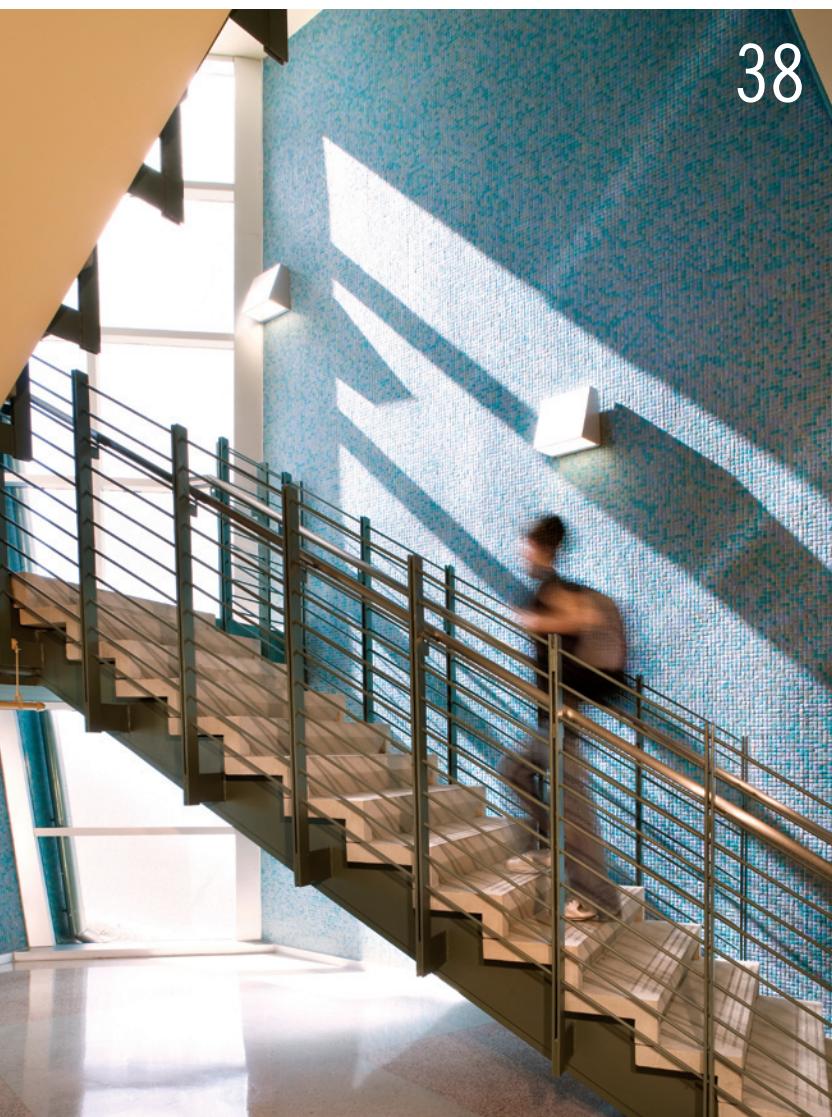


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MARCH / APRIL 2007

24 INSPIRED BY NATURE

Moreno Regional Branch Library, El Paso

IDEA

ED SOLTERO, AIA

28 CANAL STREET CATALYST

Canal Street Apartments, Houston

Val Glitsch Architect

DONNA KACMAR, AIA

34 A PROGRESSIVE LOOK BACK

Russell Creek Family YMCA, Plano

Good Fulton & Farrell Architects

GREG IBÁÑEZ, AIA

38 MISSION EXPRESSED

Harte Research Institute

for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Corpus Christi

Richter Architects

STEPHEN SHARPE

44 RESCUE IN THE PARK

Harris County Youth Services Center, Houston

Page Southerland Page

GERALD MOORHEAD, FAIA

DEPARTMENTS

05 EDITOR'S NOTE

08 NEWS/CALENDAR/PAPERWORK

22 URBAN DESIGN Austin's Search for Civic Substance

49 PORTFOLIO Public Projects

51 INSIGHT Metal in Architecture

61 MARKETPLACE

64 BACKPAGE

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Partnering to Save Sacred Places

Imperiled churches prompt a collaborative initiative to survey historic religious properties across Texas

by STEPHEN SHARPE

"Since remote times architecture has helped man in making his existence meaningful. With the aid of architecture he has gained a foothold in space and time."

—Christian Norberg-Schulz, from the preface to *Meaning in Western Architecture*

ARCHITECTURAL history essentially begins with humankind's first attempt to signify its place on the earth. Built around 5,000 years ago, Stonehenge is the most familiar starting point. The Great Pyramids of Giza and the Ziggurat at Ur, erected within the following millennium, represent the next steps in the timeline. With only ruins to offer vague clues, these earliest known artifacts imbue architectural history with existential mystery that compels us to wonder about the people who built them. Through architecture the ancients were able to express their communion with the deities, and perhaps also demonstrate their own sense of significance.

Every community strives to show its "foothold in space and time." Today, in Texas, that expression is often a house of worship. However, in small towns and big cities across the state a growing number of churches and other buildings of religious significance are imperiled by benign neglect or abandonment due either to aged congregations or shifting demographics. There's new hope for those endangered buildings now that Partners in Sacred Places, a nonprofit and nonsectarian organization based in Philadelphia, has opened a Texas regional office. Dedicated to promoting the stewardship of historic religious properties, PSP chartered its first office outside its headquarters in October. Instrumental in establishing PSP's presence in Texas was James Nader, AIA, who realized the need for greater resources to help the congregations of Fort Worth. Those congregations can now attend PSP's local workshops to learn how to raise funds to protect their properties or to find a new purpose for their old building.

Last fall, as the group was preparing to open its new regional office, Sarah Peveler, PSP's



In remote Presidio County, not much is left of the tiny town of Ruidosa except the crumbling adobe walls of the 100-year-old Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ Church. Conservation efforts began last year. Photo by Richard Payne, FAIA.

national director of training, visited the Texas Historical Commission to introduce herself to THC officials. She met with THC Deputy Director Terry Colley, who also happens to be a Baptist minister, and soon they were planning a meeting to discuss a statewide initiative.

On Jan. 24 that meeting took place, attended by three executives from PSP (Nader, Peveler, and Ruth Ann Rugg, the new director of PSP's Fort Worth office) and two from THC (Colley and his boss, THC Director Larry Oaks), along with another 13 other people invited to participate in what is being called the Western Religious Heritage Collaborative Initiative. Among those in attendance were the Rev. George Bithos, executive director of the Texas Conference of Churches; Julianne Fletcher, executive director of Preservation Texas; and Daniel Carey, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's southwest regional office in Fort Worth.

The agenda focused on one question which every attendee was obliged to consider: What

does the term "western religious heritage" mean to them? Responses revealed personal experiences with the loss of a work of sacred architecture and the lasting impact of that loss. Listening as the attendees spoke, Nader felt an empathy with each person sitting in the room.

"What people inherently understand is that as we lose these buildings we are losing a piece of our heritage. In some cases these buildings are the last vestiges of communities—there's nothing left but a church building," Nader said a few weeks after the gathering. "I'm not sure we understand the significance of that loss."

Having compiled an initial list of resources where data on older religious properties are collected, the group plans to meet again in the spring to discuss how to undertake a survey of historic church buildings in Texas. The ultimate goal is an online database that will be available to anyone interested in reviving or repurposing endangered sacred places.

Stephen Sharpe is editor of *Texas Architect*.

Architecture School Coverage 'Well Done'

Yet another really good issue of *Texas Architect* from editorial content, the selection of subjects, the graphics (although the cover is a little bland), and even the advertisements—nice work. Of course, I am particularly fond of the coverage of the architecture schools, a second "well done" but am reminded of a great comment by Professor John Perry (University of Houston): "Why do we believe everything we read in the press except when it's about something we know? Then, we see all the errors." Keep up the great effort. I always look forward to receiving the next issue of *Texas Architect*.

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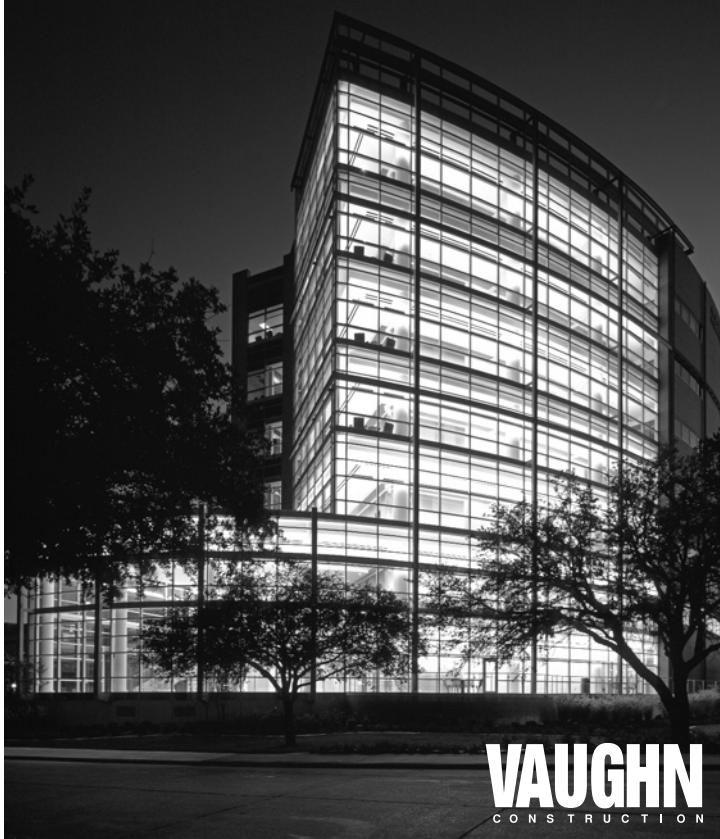
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Three New Bridges to Span Trinity River

F O R T W O R T H Imagine the Trinity River as an urban centerpiece of downtown Fort Worth. Now a reality in the making, the city is moving forward with a plan called the Trinity River Vision, an 800-acre, \$435-million project that is expected to double the size of downtown Fort Worth. At the heart of the plan, three bridges entice the community and transform the landscape.

As integral components to the Trinity River Vision, the three pedestrian-friendly bridges will cross the Trinity River channel at North Main Street, Henderson Street, and White Settlement Road to connect downtown with the new mixed-use development known as Trinity Uptown. Bing Thom Architects in Vancouver, British Columbia, recently unveiled its designs for the bridges commissioned by the Trinity River Vision Authority.

Bing Thom, known for his context-appropriate designs, is familiar with Fort Worth, having designed the downtown Tarrant County College campus currently under construction. First shown in January, Thom's designs for the multimillion-dollar bridges have been welcomed by many long-time proponents of the city's plan for the river. "The goal of the bridges and the entire Trinity River Vision project is to make the Trinity River a unique and flood-control safe place for enjoyment by residents of Fort Worth," Adelaide Leavens, executive director of Streams and Valleys, a nonprofit organization that supports projects involving the Trinity River, told the *Fort Worth Business Press*. "I believe the bridges that Mr. Thom designed accomplish that goal."

In designing the bridges, Thom integrated local Texas colors and elements. Inspired by trips around the city and state, he used indigenous shades of burnt amber and sienna, as well as naturalistic forms to make the bridges seem a part of the Texas landscape. "By using designs that are already familiar to you, to Texans, the bridges will look like they're part of the landscape, like they've been here for ages," said Thom. The bridges' distinctive intertwining arches recall water-worn formations in such places as Pedernales Falls near Austin.

Each of the three bridges will have comparable designs, but with slight differences. The North Main bridge, designed to connect the Stockyards and the rest of the city's north side to downtown, will likely have a lower elevation



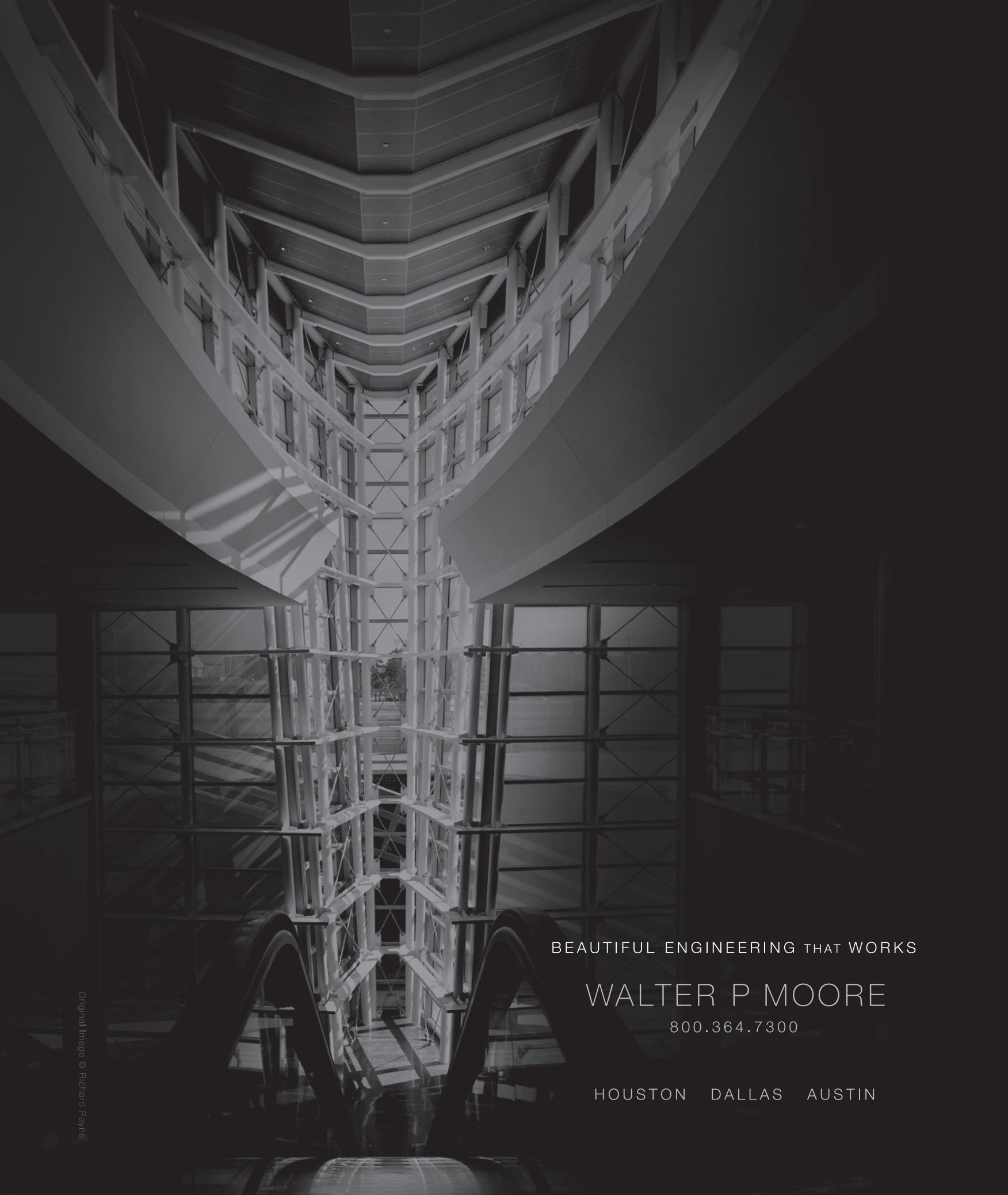
The North Main Street Bridge, planned to span the river between the 800 and 900 blocks, is designed to be 351 feet long and 72 feet wide. Three curvilinear arches will support four lanes of roadway.



Henderson Street Bridge will stretch 367 feet between the 800 and 900 blocks. At 100 feet wide, the span will incorporate five sweeping arches to support four lanes that may be extended to six.



White Settlement Road Bridge, located between the 2000 and 2400 blocks, is designed to be 317 feet long and 72 feet wide with four lanes. Four arches will cross the underside of the span.



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than the others. Also, one bridge may have more arches or curves than another. Thom describes them as siblings.

One of Thom's main concerns was to make the bridges pedestrian-friendly, an aspect that would reflect his impression of a city he finds full of gentle people. To accomplish this, he designed the structures with walkways that will connect to trails and open spaces below the roadway level. Railing and lighting designs are still under consideration. Thom has said he wants to keep the bridges as close to the water as possible, affording easy access by the public.

The construction technique is as unique as the design. Unlike most bridges, which are built over an existing body of water, the Trinity bridges will be built before the water is dredged out underneath using dirt mounds as concrete forms—a cost-control measure expected to cost approximately 25 percent less than the traditional construction method. "It's actually an ancient technique and it's much cheaper," Thom said. "You don't have to build forms and

(top right) A model depicts the future Trinity Uptown development. **(below)** At left is the area before construction. At right the bridges are shown: 1) North Main Street Bridge; 2) Henderson Street Bridge; 3) White Settlement Road Bridge.

scaffolding because you can use the land as the scaffolding."

Bing Thom Architects also is collaborating with the Tarrant County Water District to update the Trinity River flood control system and to solve the historic problem of connecting with the river while maintaining safety from flood conditions. The firm proposed the idea of building a bypass channel, creating a lake, which would divert the occasional flood waters away from the development lands. This concept involves removal of the 40-year-old levees and creates an 800-acre development site adjacent to downtown with more than 12 miles of accessible waterfront and trails. This waterfront system will give way to nearby housing and retail facilities.

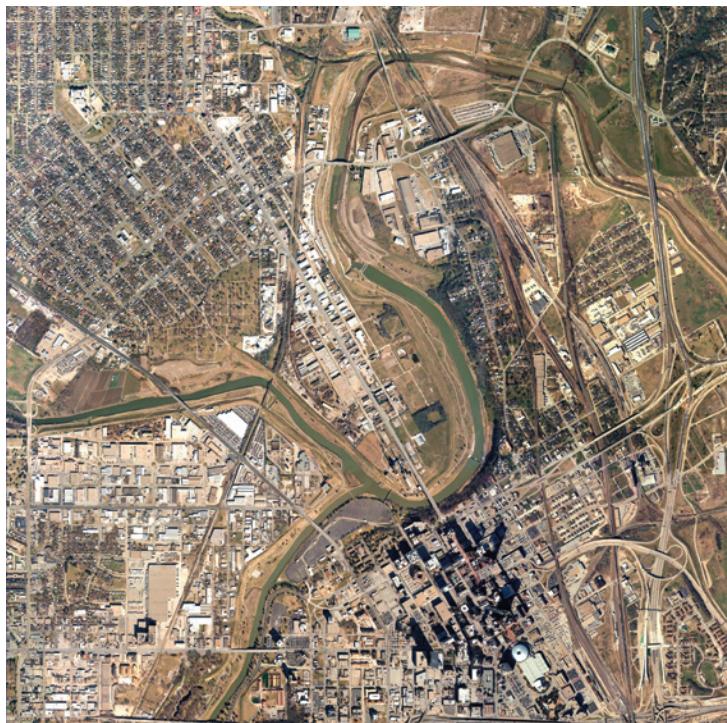
Approximately 25,000 residents are expected to live within the new development site. The site will have mixed-use neighborhoods with parks, amenities, schools, services, and retail. By placing such a large population within walking distance of Fort Worth's commercial and entertainment core, automobile dependence is expected to be reduced. Sustainable strategies such as local storm-water retention, low-impact landscaping, dense land-use development, and waste-water recycling will also be implemented in the plan.



The three bridges are expected to cost a total of \$53 million, which will be funded by the City of Fort Worth. Currently in the preliminary design phase, officials are meeting with contractors and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine feasibility and traffic logistics. As the first of the Trinity River Vision projects, construction on all three bridges is expected to begin in 2009 with completion set for June 2010.

ANDREA EXTER

The writer is associate publisher of *Texas Architect*.



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Wichita Falls' Historic Holt Hotel Revitalized for Downtown Living

W I C H I T A F A L L S While Texas' major urban centers have enjoyed a flourishing decade-long market for residential adaptive reuse of their historic downtown buildings, seldom have novel housing projects succeeded in smaller cities. Such was the case in Wichita Falls, until recently. Thanks to the undaunted initiative and dedicated altruism of heritage-savvy local citizens, one boarded-up landmark is once again a working property.

During the last 25 years, as the Holt Hotel stood forlorn, vacant, and slowly deteriorating, eight different private developers tried to restore the neo-classical building only to fail due to their inability to secure adequate financing. Seemingly doomed to languish indefinitely, the old hotel eventually became municipal property because of delinquent taxes and hopes of a new buyer dimmed. The turning point came in 2002 just as the city was being pressured to demolish the hotel to rid itself of a potential safety liability posed by the derelict multi-story building. Recognizing the irreversible consequences of the city's losing a significant piece of its heritage, a trio of locals (preservationist Ann Smith, architect Dick Bundy, AIA, and city planning director Dave Clark) devised a strategy. They enlisted local Boy Scouts to clean the lobby to make the building more marketable, and then alerted the press. The publicity that resulted was the catalyst for the "Now or Never" campaign that raised \$670,000 in gap financing that saved the hotel from being razed.

'Before' and 'after' photos illustrate the extent of the recent work on the interior spaces.



The exterior of the refurbished building looks much the same as in 1926 after its top two floors were added. Originally built in 1910, the Holt Hotel languished for 30 years as a downtown eyesore in Wichita Falls.

Conceived in 1910 as the Kemp and Kell Building, the original structure was designed by Hubbell and Greene of Dallas with a basement, a raised ground-level space for a bank, and four floors of offices above. Framed with light-gauge steel and concrete with composite masonry walls, the landmark was the city's first bona-fide "fireproof" building. Reinventing the place 16 years later when the oil economy was booming, Voelcker & Dixon of Wichita Falls

lowered the ground floor to sidewalk level, which eliminated the full basement, and added a mezzanine and two floors on top to yield the eight-story silhouette that exists today. The 1926 expansion/renovation also converted the ground floor into commercial space and the upper floors into individual lodgings that comprised the Holt Hotel.

For the last 30 years, the old office building lapsed into a state of disrepair, a common fate in cities whose older downtown buildings have outlived their original purposes. The Holt Hotel, because of its prominence in the middle of town, eventually devolved into a conspicuous eyesore that time seemed to have left behind. Recognizing the need to "take care of what you have," city officials teamed with members of the Wichita County Heritage Society to engage the New York-based nonprofit National Development Council as the developer of a residential/commercial project led by David Potter, AIA, a principal of the local firm Bundy, Young, Sims & Potter. The architect and his firm had worked previously with three other developers to realize the project but those attempts were all abandoned due to financial constraints.

This time, the Wichita County Heritage Society put together a very complicated financing package with the assistance of the National





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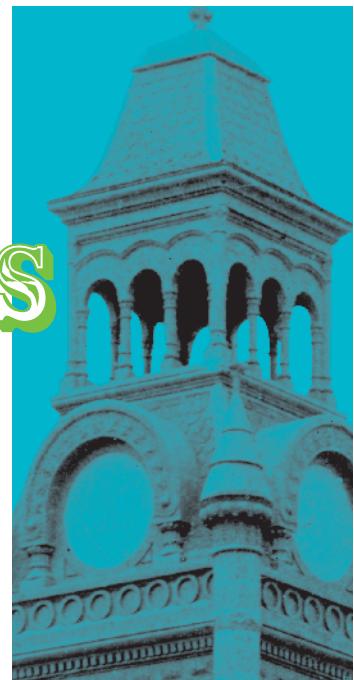
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Big Glee Office Building, Mesquite
Buff Texas Stone and Modular V102
Architect: Stacy Architectural Studio,
Dallas



Development Council's Stephanie Dugan. The package consisted of historic preservation tax credits through the National Trust Community Investment Corporation/Bank of America, pledges from several foundations, and a private loan from a consortium of local banks, as well as grants from various state and federal agencies. (Just a few months before the Holt restoration began in 2004, the hotel was included as part of the National Register's newly designated Depot Square Historic District.)

The project's \$7 million budget, although ambitious, did not allow any embellishments. The scope was restricted to a straightforward restoration that would return the exterior to its 1926 appearance while also saving the original corridor walls and doors along with the mosaic tile floors. The new construction re-configured the hotel rooms into one- and two-bedroom apartments, and brought the historic building's plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems up to code.

Completed in 2005, the new apartments did not rent quickly (with only 10 of the 41 units leased in the first six months) and speculation loomed as to whether Wichita Falls' gamble on downtown living would pay off. Then, within the next three months, all but two of the units were leased. Now, more than a year since its first tenant took occupancy, there is a waiting list. Moreover, the apparently successful venture has inspired private-sector developers to create 36 new rental units in other nearby vacant buildings.

The greatest deterrents to realizing the downtown apartments' project were the significant investment (new construction would have cost less) and the risk associated with adapting an abandoned property to a different use. Given Wichita Falls' unlikely success, other small cities can refer to the Holt Hotel as an example of a community's perseverance in overcoming the daunting obstacles of a restoration project with a similar forlorn stigma.

The local heritage society will begin to assume partial ownership of the Holt Hotel in five years when the historic tax credit compliance period expires. When that milestone is reached, the momentum created by this project is virtually assured to continue because the nonprofit group will use the Holt's revenue stream as an endowment to re-invest in other Wichita Falls preservation projects.

While the Holt is clearly alive and well, and again generating income, one of the embellishments that was value-engineered out of the project is expected to be resurrected—the 20-foot-tall sign mounted on the roof that outlines the words "HOLT HOTEL" in marquee-style white lights. The sign, although non-functioning, still exists and will be restored so that the revitalized landmark may once more proclaim that it is back in business.

LAWRENCE CONNOLLY, AIA

The writer is a *Texas Architect* contributing editor.

Northeast Texas 2006 Design Awards

T Y L E R Seven projects were recognized at the Northeast Texas AIA annual Christmas party and chapter meeting. The jury panel consisted of Kenneth Apel, AIA, of HKS in Dallas; Gary Kirchoff, AIA, of HH Architects in Dallas; and Andrew Vernooy, AIA, dean of the Texas Tech School of Architecture.

Fitzpatrick Butler Architects in Tyler won six awards, including a Design Award for Mobberly Baptist Church in Longview and a Merit Award for Channel House in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The firm also won four Honorable Mentions for projects in Tyler—Four Seasons Women's Health, South Tyler Dermatology, Student Center Addition at Green Acres Baptist Church, and South Gate. The remaining Honorable Mention was awarded to Thacker-Davis Architects in Longview for Memorial Garden.

Mobberly Baptist Church's "Elevation" is a multi-purpose building designed as a worship and gathering space for teenagers. The interior spaces were constructed of a number of durable, industrial materials to create multiple vignettes that encourage student participation in a spirited atmosphere.

Channel House is a conceptual design for an "off-the-grid" home and laboratory. Utilizing sustainable and technologically advanced systems, the house engages the local elements with

minimal site impact as a responsive "machine for living."

Four Seasons is a complete renovation of an existing daycare into a women's clinic. Reorganizing the orientation of the building creates a new front door with an inviting atmosphere. New materials and colors were introduced to bring light and warmth into the space.

The South Tyler Dermatology Clinic reflects the natural beauty of a semi-forested suburban site through geometry, imagery, and use of natural materials. Views from inside the building are focused on a landscaped nature garden.

Green Acres Baptist Church's Student Center Addition extends an existing classroom layout for added assembly, worship, and lounge space. These spaces can accommodate a variety of functions by connecting or separating adjacent areas. Durable finishes were used in creative ways to accentuate the "hip" student environment.



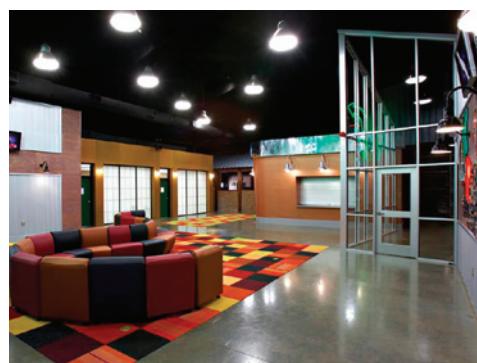
Channel House

South Gate is a new commercial/office building requiring eye-catching appeal for its limited sightlines along a busy urban thoroughfare. A palate of galvanized metal, limestone veneer, and painted steel reflect the client's interests in ranching and land management.

Memorial Garden for St. Andrew Presbyterian Church is a design concept that represents the Christian life experience through a progression of spaces in a natural garden setting. Emphasis is placed on the longevity of materials, limited maintenance, and the user's connection with God's creation throughout.

BRETT PATRICK, AIA

The writer chaired AIA Northeast Texas' 2006 Design Award Committee.



Mobberly Baptist Church 'Elevation'

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Texas Projects Receive AIA Honors

W A S H I N G T O N , D C Three projects in Texas were among the 29 projects recognized this year with AIA's Honor Awards, the profession's highest recognition of works that exemplify excellence in three categories—architecture, interior architecture, and urban design. The annual competition attracted a total of almost 700 entries, with independent juries reviewing submittals in each of the categories.

The World Birding Center in Mission by Lake/Flato Architects was one of 11 projects selected to receive a 2007 Institute Honor Awards for Architecture. The jury was chaired by Richard Logan, AIA, of Gensler's Atlanta



World Birding Center

office. Located in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, one of the richest bird habitats in the world, the World Birding Center comprises a series of buildings stretched in two east-west lines, paralleling an irrigation canal to the south and partially enclosing an events court and two gardens between them. The design of the complex, inspired by the simplicity and efficiency of the region's agricultural structures, features corrugated steel arched roof panels, brick walls, and shaded walkways.

ImageNet in Carrollton by Elliot + Associates Architects of Oklahoma City received one of 11 Honor Awards for Interior Architecture. Ann Beha, FAIA, of Ann Beha Architects in Boston served as jury chair. ImageNet creates a landmark location through the use of bold, sculptural elements, including a "paper wall" in the reception area and a "spider web" of data and power cords in the central work space. Perimeter blue polycarbonate panels separate the office from the warehouse and existing



ImageNet

red iron was incorporated into the warehouse design. Architectural representations of a "controlled chaos" allude to ImageNet's photocopying business.

Seven projects were recognized with Honor Awards for Regional and Urban Design, including The Balanced Vision Plan for the Trinity River Corridor by Chan Krieger Sieniewicz of Cambridge, Mass. The jury chair was J. Max Bond, Jr., FAIA, of Davis Brody Bond in New York City. The project is designed to transform the riverfront in Dallas from a flood canal into a meandering waterway with pockets of forest, wetlands, and two lakes of treated urban wastewater. Under the plan, the Trinity River's banks would become the site of several hundred acres of new residential and commercial development, including a roadway infrastructure fitting to the design of surrounding urban parks and trails. A narrower, slower speed parkway would offer access to areas of development and recreation, as well as vistas of the parks and the city.



Trinity River Corridor

Taniguchi Unveils Asia House Design

H O U S T O N Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi unveiled his schematic design (shown at right) in December for Asia House, Asia Society Texas Center's 38,000-sf facility in Houston's museum district.

Taniguchi is best known for his designs of museums and galleries in Japan, and gained recognition in the U.S. for his renovation and expansion of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Houston's Asia House will be his first free-standing building in the United States.

His schematic design places a two-story building adjacent to five garden spaces, making a relationship to nature—a distinctive charac-

teristic of Asian architecture—central to the design. The organization and the progression of spaces will correspond with the gardens. According to the architect, the building will be defined by two perpendicular planes that create interior, exterior, and intermediate spaces.

Ground breaking is scheduled in the fall, with completion scheduled for late 2009. The Houston firm of Kendall/Heaton & Associates will act as architect of record, with Geoffrey J. Brune, AIA, of Houston serving as project manager.





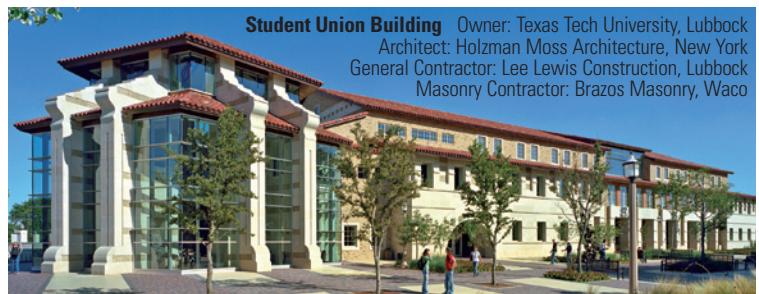
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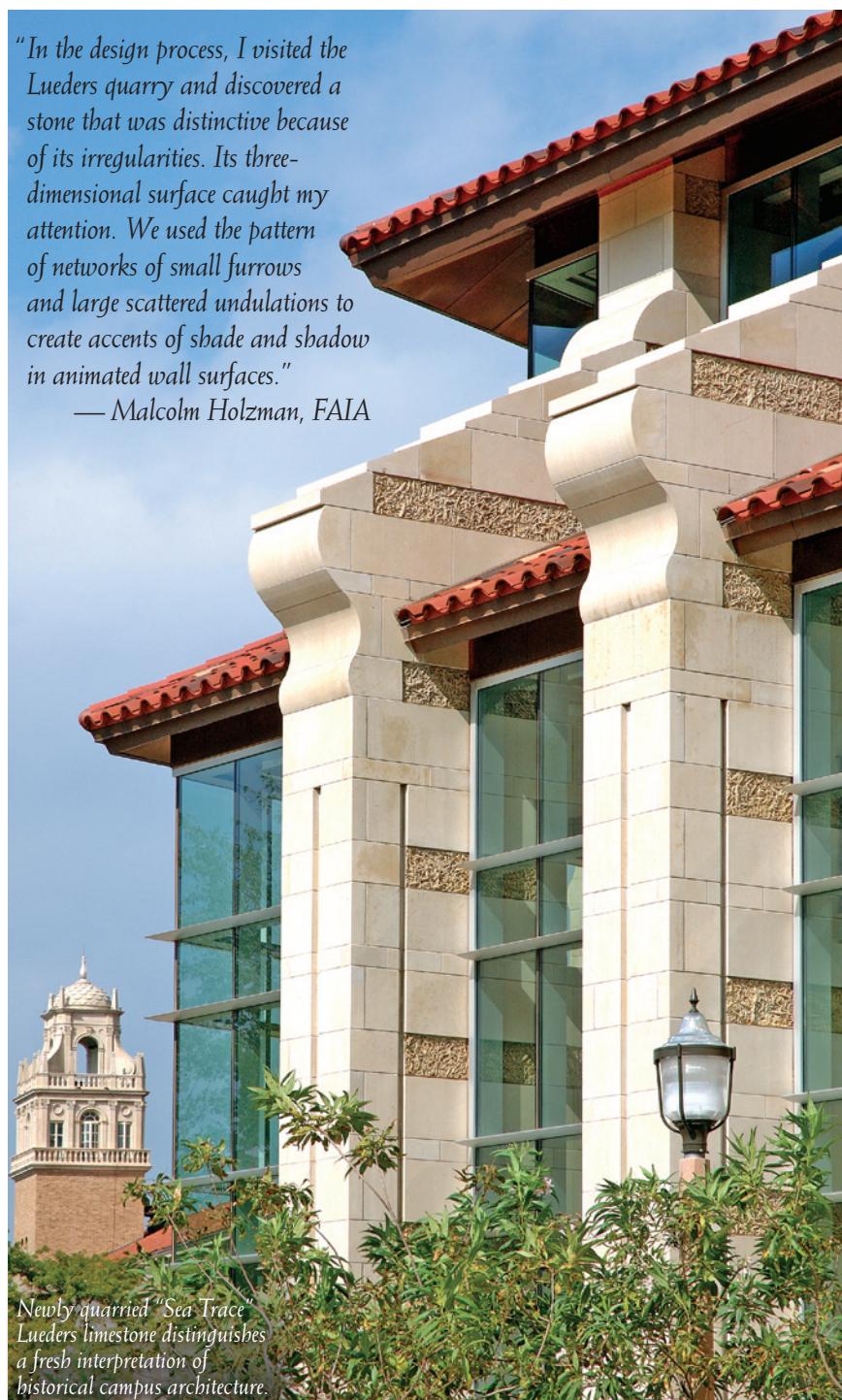
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— Malcolm Holzman, FAIA



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Six Texans Elected AIA Fellows

W A S H I N G T O N , D C Six TSA members, along with 70 other architects from around the nation, were elected AIA Fellows by the 2007 Jury of Fellows on Feb. 23. The following Texans are among the new Fellows who will be invested in the College of Fellows during the AIA convention in San Antonio:

John Grable of John Grable Architects for promoting the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession through design; nominated by AIA San Antonio.

Gary D. Lynn of Parsons for ensuring the advancement of the living standards of people through his notable contributions to government organizations and leadership in raising the standards of design; nominated by AIA San Antonio.

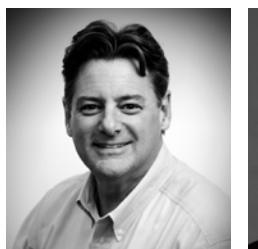
Robert L. Meckfessel of dsgn associates for making the profession of ever-increasing service to society; nominated by AIA Dallas.

Greg Papay of Lake/Flato Architects for promoting the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession through design; nominated by AIA San Antonio.

Clyde Porter of the Dallas County Community College District's Department of Facilities Management and Planning for his public service work to ensure the advancement of the living standards of people through their improved environment; nominated by AIA Dallas.

Brooke Sween-McGloin of McGloin + Sween for making the profession of ever-increasing service to society through volunteer work; nominated by AIA Corpus Christi.

The 2007 Jury of Fellows was chaired by Lorri D. Sipes, FAIA, of Ann Arbor, Mich. Other



Grable



Lynn



Meckfessel



Papay



Porter



Sween-McGloin

jury members were Lee H. Askew, FAIA, of ANF Architects in Memphis; Rebecca G. Barnes, FAIA, of Brown University in Providence, R.I.; Daniel S. Friedman, FAIA, of the University of Illinois' Chicago School of Architecture; Phillip H. Gerou, FAIA, of Gerou & Associates in Evergreen, Colo.; Walter Schamu, FAIA, of Schamu Machowski Greco Architects in Baltimore; and Carol Shen of ELS Architecture and Urban Design in Berkeley.

Hoogeboom Selected as AIA Young Architect

W A S H I N G T O N , D C Lonnie D. Hoogeboom, AIA, a partner in the Houston firm of Natalye Appel + Associates LLC, is one of six recipients of the 2007 AIA Young Architect Award. Hoogeboom was previously honored with TSA's Award for Young Professional Achievement in 2006.

Hoogeboom was recognized for his ethical leadership in outreach, mentorship, and professionalism, as well as his outstanding design contributions. Hoogeboom also has been active in the Rice Design Alliance since 1996, and has



Hoogeboom

served as the RDA's program committee chair. He has served as partner-in-charge/project architect for many of his firm's projects over the last five years. "I cannot imagine a more dedicated and vibrant young contributor to the architectural professional, to the AIA, and to architectural outreach," wrote Natalye L. Appel, FAIA, in her letter of nomination.

Registration Deadline Nears for THC Conference

The Texas Historical Commission's Annual Historic Preservation Conference, themed "Changing Faces, Historic Places," will be held April 13-14 in Lakeview. The keynote speaker will be Lisa M. Burcham of Virginia-based Burcham & Associates Heritage Consulting. Call (512) 463-6255 or visit www.thc.state.tx.us. Deadline is MARCH 26

Tour Explores Evolution of Texas Ranch House

Preservation Dallas follows the design evolution of the Texas ranch house on its 2007 Architectural Tour. Keynote speaker will be Alan Hess, author of "The Ranch House" and architectural critic for the *San Jose Mercury News*. Visit www.preservationdallas.org or call (214) 821-3290. MARCH 31

Bergdoll Presents "At Home in the Museum"

Barry Bergdoll, chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York will speak at 7 p.m. in Rice University's Herring Hall as part of the Menil/Rice Lecture Series "Architecture and Museums." Visit www.menil.org or call (713) 525-9400. APRIL 3

AIA National Architecture Week

2007 marks 150 years of service to the nation by the American Institute of Architects. To celebrate, AIA will launch National Architecture Week with events planned worldwide. APRIL 9-14

RDA Hosts Tour of Southampton Neighborhood

Nine homes in one of Houston's most distinctive neighborhoods will be featured on this two-day tour, open to members of the Rice Design Alliance and guests. RDA memberships can be purchased at any of the homes on the tour. Call (713) 348-4876 or visit www.rda.rice.edu. APRIL 14-15

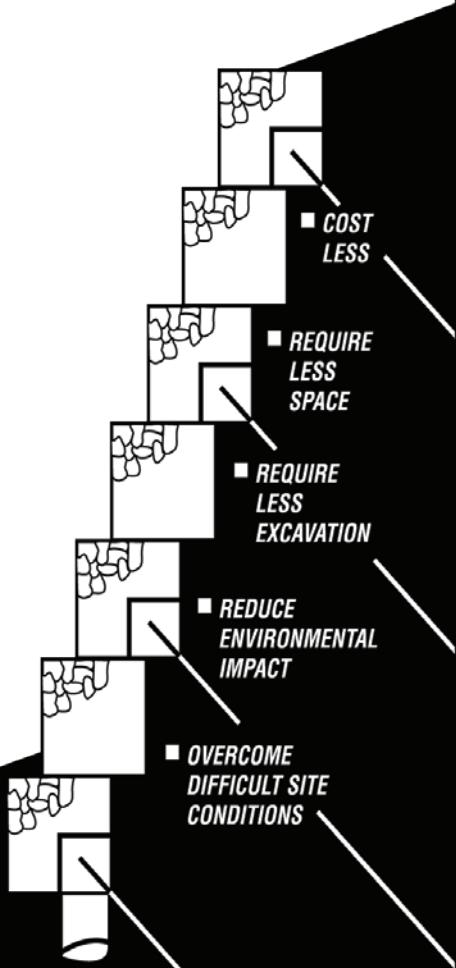
Lacaton to Speak at Dallas Museum of Art

The Dallas Architecture Forum hosts French architect Anne Lacaton, co-founder of prize-winning Lacaton Vassal Architects of Paris. The lecture will take place at 7 p.m. in Horchow Auditorium at the Dallas Museum of Art. More information is available online at www.dallasarchitectureforum.org or call (214) 764-2406. APRIL 18

2007 AIA Convention Set for San Antonio

Following the theme "Growing Beyond Green," this year's convention celebrates San Antonio's history as well as AIA's sesquicentennial. Planned activities include guest and professional tours and gallery exhibits. Visit www.aiaconvention.com or www.aiasa.org for more information. MAY 3-5

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Homeless Assistance Center

Sanctuary, light, and sustainability are the key themes of the design for the City of Dallas' Homeless Assistance Center to be located on a three-acre downtown site. CamargoCopeland and Overland Partners are working together as the architects. The center will reuse an existing warehouse to provide an overnight pavilion for the chronic homeless. New buildings will create a campus-like environment and house essential services, including short-term housing and food service, education and training, social and health services, and community interaction. Translucent wall panels will fill the residence areas with abundant natural light. At night the illuminated panels and an integral art installation will serve as beacons to the city. With its daily population estimated at 500 to 800 people, water use is expected to be significant so the architects have devised a comprehensive "gray water" management system to reduce water consumption by half in response to city officials' desire for the project to achieve a LEED Silver Certification. The budget is set at just over \$16 million to construct the project with a gross building area of 75,042 square feet.

John Igo Branch Library

Planned as one of the largest branch libraries for the City of San Antonio, the project is designed to preserve the natural landscape and history of the land. The 16,555-sf library, designed by RVK Architects, will be built at the edge of a 24-acre tract that will be developed as a municipal park. Located in the city's far northwest sector, the land's features vary between South Texas wildflower meadows and Hill Country live oaks, with a pathway leading visitors from the library to reading areas set underneath the canopy of a heritage oak. The library itself will be almost hidden from the main road by existing vegetation, and visitors will park amid natural clusters of trees and grasses. Signifying the library's entry, a 30-foot-tall windmill will circulate water through a channel inside the building that will run parallel to a 120-foot-long wall of one-inch-thick insulated glass. Overall energy performance also will be controlled by large overhangs of the library's metal roof and decorative metal awnings.



East Biloxi Model Home

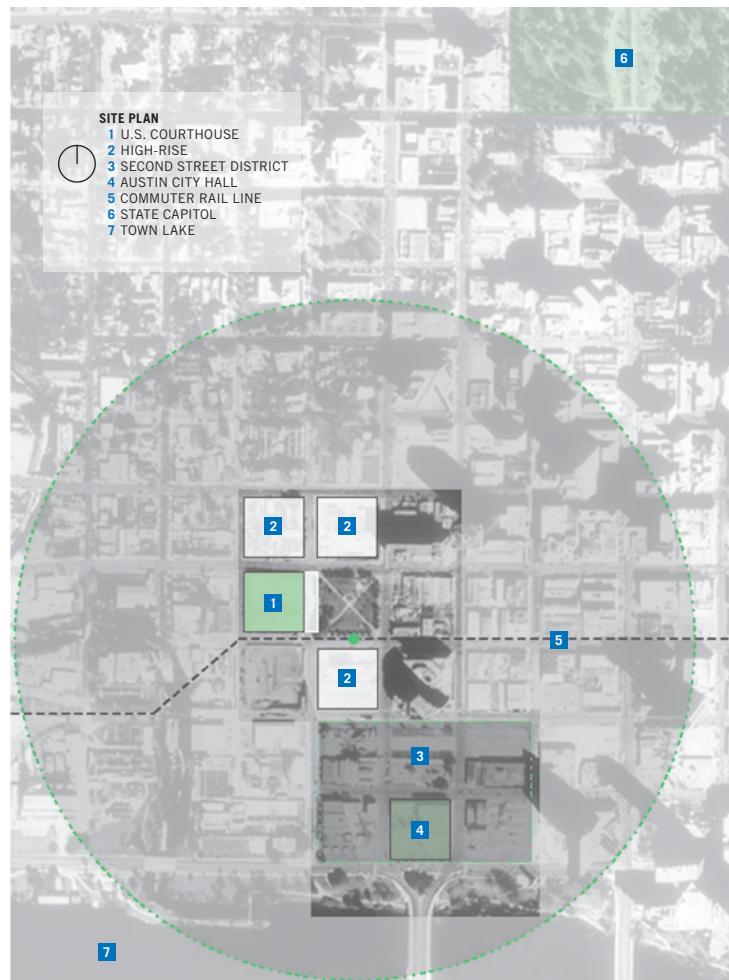
MC² Architects of Houston was among 12 firms selected by Architecture for Humanity to design residential prototypes for its Model Home program. The goal of the program is to provide design services and financial assistance for the construction of new homes for families in East Biloxi, Miss., whose houses were destroyed in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina. The design of the prototype is inspired by the traditional bungalow found throughout the Gulf Coast region. The house can be adapted easily to a number of conditions. The plan is a simple "shot gun" configuration with a front porch. Inside, a hallway runs the length of the house with all rooms to one side. An open room with tall ceilings serves as the living, dining, and kitchen area. The wood structure frame is designed to allow interior walls to be non-load bearing and free from the frame, resulting in an extremely flexible structural system. Built with a basic kit, the house can easily be reconfigured or expanded without disrupting the structural frame.

Austin's Search for Civic Substance

At the center of the city's transformation sits an urban park with unfilled potential

by DEAN ALMY

IF all goes according to plan, on the morning of Feb. 25 the five-story structural frame that was once part of a planned \$124-million office building for the Intel Corporation will be imploded to make way for a new federal courthouse. The skeletal remains of the unfinished project, abandoned by Intel in 2001 after a downturn in the technology sector, loomed for six years over the southwestern quadrant of downtown. Conspicuous on the skyline, the forsaken structure has also drawn attention to the unfulfilled civic potential of the public park located immediately to the east. The Intel demolition, scheduled but not begun before press time, marks a threshold in the fortunes of Republic Square, one of the four original urban parks established by Edwin Waller's 1839 plan for Austin.



Republic Square, identifiable by the "X" of criss-crossing sidewalks, appears destined to have new high-profile neighbors. Mixed-use developments are planned to the north, northwest, and south, with the city's new U.S. Courthouse to the west.

Republic Square sits at the center of a massive transformation that is rapidly and radically altering Austin's downtown urban landscape. No fewer than 34 projects are either under construction, in the permitting process, or on the boards—and more are on the way. The majority of these projects are high-rise, mixed-use developments located in and around the central business district's southwestern sector or nearby along the shores of Town Lake. Also included in the mix are proposals for a number of long-awaited civic institutions. Redevelopment represents something of a moving target around Republic Square however, as both private developers and public institutions jockey for position. While the resultant urban assemblage has the potential to establish a new heart in Austin—one capable of bringing together a diversity of programs representing the cultural, civic, residential, and commercial faces of the city—achieving the desired synchronicity remains an elusive goal.

Like most American cities, Austin's urban fabric has been, and continues to be, constructed piecemeal by private interests who seldom gaze beyond the boundaries of their respective property lines. Even with organizations such as the Downtown Austin Alliance advocating for years a comprehensive approach to urban development, only recently has progress been realized. To date, the major achievement affecting the southwest quadrant has been ongoing revitalization in the so-called Second Street District. Developed under a set of structural and spatial guidelines whose primary agent is the "Downtown Great Streets Master Plan," the Second Street District has initiated some long-awaited street life in the downtown. The completion of Austin City Hall in 2004, designed by Antoine Predock, was the catalyst, and the civic complex now serves as the hub of the new commercial district.

The precedent of architectural cooperation on the district's development has raised expectations that continued involvement by respected and engaged architects could enhance the urban design of adjacent districts, including Republic Square. However, the recent boom in downtown residential development appears to make it less likely that such a cooperative atmosphere can be maintained. For instance, market pressures have significantly increased to the point that it is no longer economically feasible to limit building heights in the same manner as was achieved in the Second Street District. The overheated market for downtown living already has resulted in some new developments in and around downtown being planned to reach more than 400 feet in height. Even though the city's design guidelines address issues such as the "view corridor" that is meant to protect sightlines toward the State Capitol, the quality and continuity of new development has been largely left up to individual developers. Variances have been granted on a case-by-case basis and as of now no real mechanisms exist for a qualitative evaluation of each project's contribution to the overall spatial structure of the city. While the City of Austin has recently contracted the ROMA Design Group to prepare a master plan for urban development in the central business district, the components



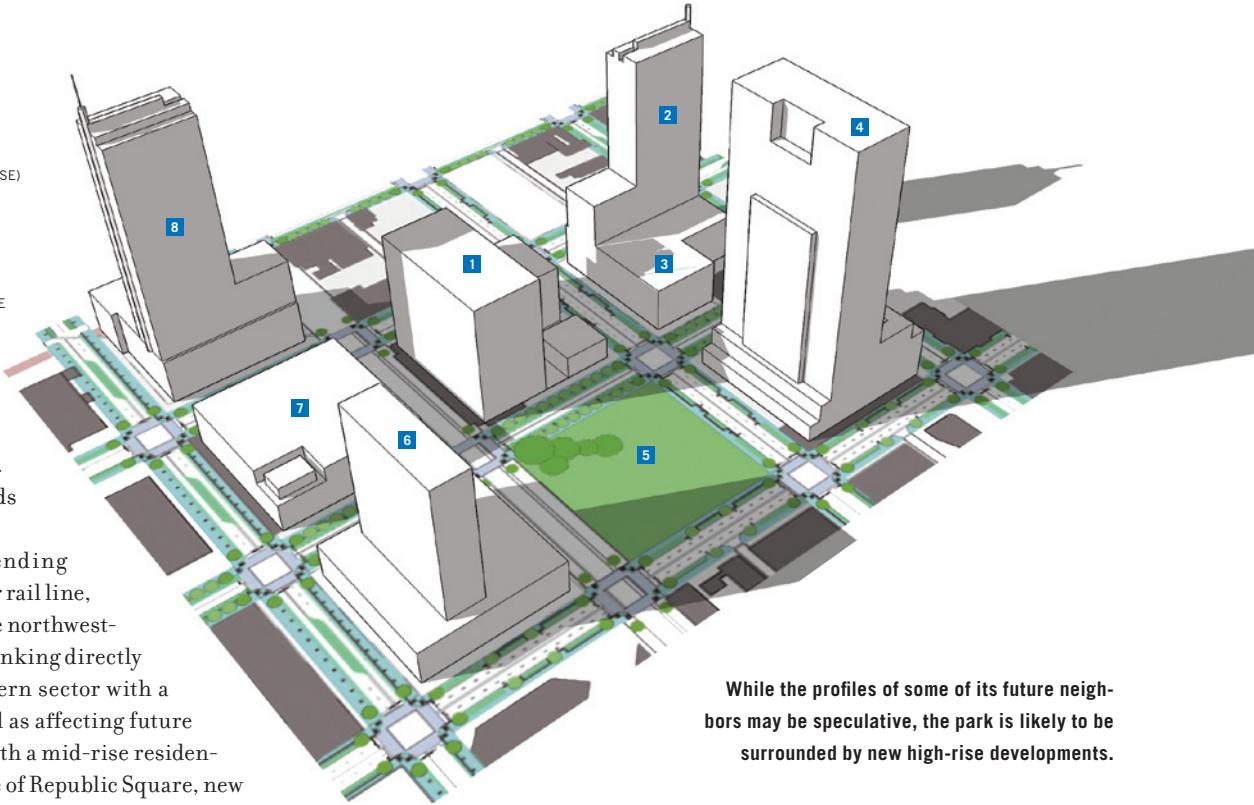
of the document are still embryonic. Meanwhile, urban development proceeds at break-neck speed.

Another major factor is the impending construction of Austin's first commuter rail line, which will connect the downtown to the northwest suburbs. This has the potential of linking directly into the heart of the CBD's southwestern sector with a stop located at Republic Square, as well as affecting future development of adjacent properties. With a mid-rise residential tower newly in place on the east side of Republic Square, new developments are underway along the southern, western, and northern flanks that will fill in property that has been dormant for decades.

Foremost is the federal courthouse, which will very likely replace the forsaken Intel frame to the west. The General Services Administration purchased the site to construct a new courthouse that has been designed by the Atlanta firm of Mack Scoggin and Merrill Elam Architects with assistance from the Austin office of Page Southerland Page. While the courthouse project is unabashedly modern, it is also responsibly urban as a building that directly transmits its program to the city. Faced with the introverted program of a courthouse, the architects have attempted to transcend that inherent condition through the use of transparent and translucent volumes.

The project is undoubtedly monumental, as befits its stature as a federal courthouse, and not a fabric building. It provides an opportunity to bring a signature piece of architecture to the city, one that is appropriately civic. As such, it will be Austin's third significant object-building (after the State Capitol and the City Hall), and like them it will face a major public space—Republic Square. Mack Scoggin, FAIA, has been responsible for a series of sublimely beautiful projects around the U.S., and this project is no less significant. His concept for the courthouse presents the city with a taught cubic volume facing a reconstructed park space, while providing a ground-level facility (accessible for public use) as an overture to the community. It is along the sides of the building that urban questions arise, however, primarily due to a site that slopes away from the square. The architects have designed a plinth upon which the building sits, and this condition prevents the continuity of street-level programs along the adjacent corridors of Fourth Street and Fifth Street, thereby disrupting the potential of pedestrian connections to the west.

Locating a federal courthouse at Republic Square brings along with it a series of constraints amplified by homeland security regulations. Among them is the requirement for a 50-foot buffer in front of the building. The implications of this regulation are that if the new building is to maintain continuity along the urban street wall of the city and not push back from the square, a closure of that segment of San Antonio Street located between the new courthouse and the square will be necessary. This might turn



While the profiles of some of its future neighbors may be speculative, the park is likely to be surrounded by new high-rise developments.

out to be a blessing, however, as in spite of a break in the continuity of the urban street grid – a situation that does not normally represent good urban design practice – it has the advantage of directly attaching a piece of program to the western edge of the park. To develop this connection to the square, the designers of the courthouse have secured the services of Hargreaves Associates as landscape architects, a firm with a tradition for transcending the purely “pastoral” image of landscapes by treating the ground plane as a constructed surface. This tactic allows for an increased capability of the landscape to accommodate multiple programs and multiple scales of program. Therefore, the reworked park might allow the square to transcend sentimental notions of “nature” and instead create an urban outdoor space that is active and full of life.

To the immediate south of Republic Square is land set aside for the Austin Museum of Art. For decades, AMOA has been attempting to construct a new facility on the property but a series of high-profile proposals have been discarded due to a lack of funding. Recently, negotiations between local developer Tom Stacy and architect Pelli Clarke Pelli to build out the block following a strategy pioneered by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, that of adding a condominium tower to help fund the museum, have dissolved and it is rumored that negotiations have now begun with ZOM, a Florida development company and builders of the Monarch, a high-rise residential project to be located nearby. The potential tradeoff is the loss of an architecturally significant museum in return for a development project that actually might get built.

Located directly across from Republic Square to the north is the existing U.S. Post Office comprising a single-story structure situated atop a parking garage that encompasses the entire block. The design is based on a suburban strip typology and represents one of the worst examples of urban land use in the city. But that problem is about to go away now that Atlanta-based Novare Group Holdings and Austin-based Andrews Urban have recently made a deal with the federal government to buy that block

“CIVIC SUBSTANCE” continued on page 48

Inspired by Nature

by ED SOLTRO, AIA

A metaphorical leaf
falls in the borderland
to eradicate illiteracy



PROJECT Esperanza Acosta Moreno Regional Branch Library, El Paso

CLIENT City of El Paso Public Libraries

ARCHITECT IDEA

DESIGN TEAM Guillermo Barajas, AIA; Nicole Ferrini; Roger Martinez; Erica Alisa Barajas

CONTRACTOR Dantex Construction

CONSULTANTS Henry K. Ng (structural); Brock & Bustillos (civil); Gutierrez Landscape Associates (landscape); EMC Consulting Engineers (MEP); A2 Collaborative (interior); Rio Grande BPSI (furniture); American Library Center (library)

PHOTOGRAPHER Fred Golden

THE character of the public library has evolved from that of a mere repository for books to one of a space whose functions address the many aspects of daily community life. When the El Paso Public Library System commissioned IDEA Architects for the new Esperanza Acosta Moreno Regional Library, expectations were set high and in that direction. As one of the first branch libraries built with funds from the 2000 "Quality of Life" bond election, the program's administration was placed under citizens' review. All new library projects were charged with goals of not only eradicating illiteracy in border communities, but to serve as catalysts for building robust neighborhoods.

A flat, characterless desert site, on the city's far east side, was selected for the project. After walking the site with the new and progressive library director, Carol Brey-Casiano, it was decided then that an opportunity for a new architectural direction had presented itself for the library system. Although the project team, under the guidance of design principal Guillermo Barajas, looked long and hard at the featureless site for clues in generating a *parti* for the facility, the effort was eventually abandoned altogether.

As luck would have it, the answer literally fell on the architect's hands while visiting the East Coast in the fall. A leaf rendered in beautiful autumn colors resulted in the beginnings of an organic scheme for the project. It was assigned an imaginary life, one of a traveler collecting facts, images, experiences, wishes, and, ultimately, stories as it went about its journeys. Its impression was transposed onto the site and adjusted to fit the various programmatic needs.

The new 21,500-square-foot facility contains a multi-purpose room, children's and adults' reading areas, a space dedicated solely for teens, an art gallery, computer station zone, youth workroom, a "Friends of the Library" bookstore, and ancillary support spaces. True to its calling, the new library also supports a multitude of varied uses such as plays, community gatherings, puppet shows, and other public functions.



(opposite page) The library, built on a featureless desert landscape, creates its own context through a design inspired by nature and a color palette of autumn hues. The site is within a 20-acre municipal park. (this page) Custom finishes carry the outdoors theme inside the public areas.

The footprint of the new multi-functional community space has large re-entrant cutouts that spill natural light into all of the public areas and reinforce the idea of a leaf's outline. These also project the interior areas onto the outdoor reading spaces. A serpentine circulation path is broadcast from one end of the building to the other as a metaphor for the stem. It ends in the Quiet Area, a dramatic reading space that seems to soar out from the body of the building. The gently swerving form serves as a simple organizing spine for all of the interior spaces. The dynamic quality of the library spaces are made possible through this path and the absence of doors. It allows visitors to obtain a view of the majority of the public areas at a glance. (In a whimsical gesture, the library director and the architect coined a new term – "glanceability" – to describe the capacity to understand something through a single glimpse. The new word is prominently displayed on the building plaque.)

The interior palette of materials consists of brightly painted gypsum board walls attached to a neutral gray, exposed steel roof deck. Muted floral and geometric patterns adorn both the sheet vinyl floor finishes and carpets. Millwork is clad in plastic laminate with abstract patterns that mimic stacks of fallen leaves. The colors of autumn are ever-present. The imagery of a leaf's life-line is likewise represented through the use of fabric ducts, although these capillaries distribute conditioned air rather than water.

Intensifying the wonderful symphony of the senses are the soaring, colliding spaces and rays of daylight entering the rooms through abrasions on the roof line. The quality of light filtering into the spaces below is a mixture of diffused and bright, direct sunlight. The interior's colorful, nature-inspired composition is further complemented by three barkless tree trunks that support portions of the roof. The columns are sensitively anchored to the floor in a fashion to appear as if growing out from small beds of smooth river stones. Also, custom fabrics in a myriad of colors

Interest in the playful composition of elements began during construction with caravans of curious onlookers intent on deciphering the dramatic arrangement of forms developing before their eyes.



The building's internal circulation path snakes through the facility and clearly conveys the organization of the varied internal functions.

carry the outdoors theme to the prefabricated, modular computer workstations. In particular, fabric canopies in each workstation resemble huge leaves looming overhead.

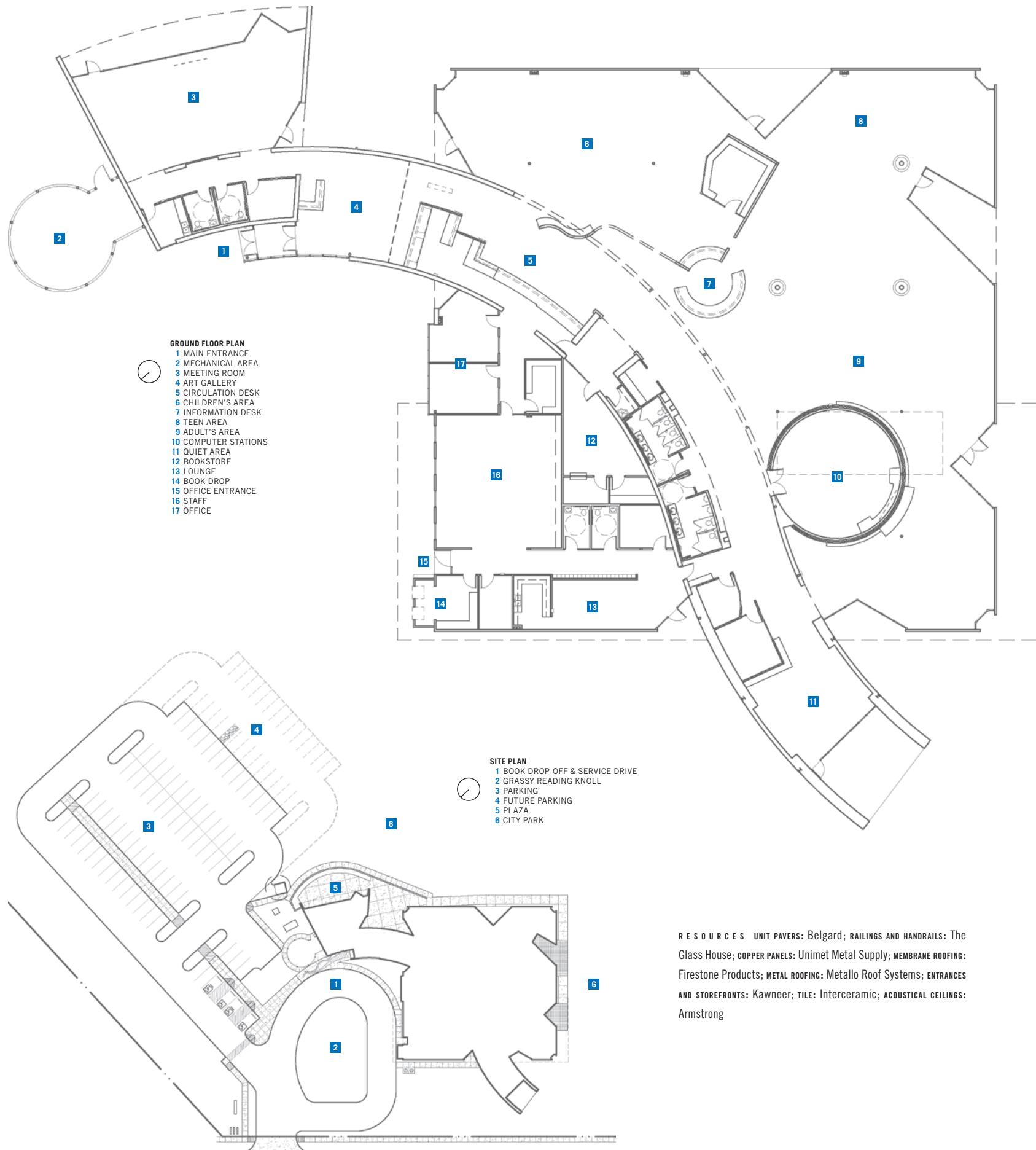
Seen from the exterior, the varied forms and collection of masses spread out in a welcoming gesture to pedestrians and motorists alike. In fact, interest in the playful composition of elements began early during the construction process with weekend caravans of cars and trucks lined up to view the progress. The parade of curious onlookers seemed intent on deciphering the dramatic arrangement of forms developing before their eyes.

Dominating the composition is the serpentine structure, the metaphorical leaf stem, that clearly organizes the masses housing the varied internal functions. A portion of this symbolic stem, clad in copper panels finished with a natural patina, cantilevers ever so slightly above the ground much as a leaf does when it lands on the earth. Brightly painted precast concrete panels are juxtaposed against integrally colored concrete-block walls to form the body of the leaf, while simple metal-clad overhangs protect the sliced-off corners of the building against direct sunlight.

The architecture is greatly enhanced by the sparse yet elegantly detailed verdant landscaping. Large boulders, arranged in a semi-circle, sit atop the smooth river stones abundant on the southwestern end of the site. The combination of smooth river stones and turf remind one of the detritus left over after raking leaves.

The Esperanza Acosta Moreno Regional Library's iconoclastic design, its unique massing, and free-flowing interior spaces challenge the conventional staid libraries of the past and heralds the arrival of a new era for El Paso's public library system whose mission is the elimination of illiteracy from this border region. Yet, while the architecture of this new facility is successful in many ways, its greatest achievement is in bringing the community back in touch with the joy that comes from reading a book. ■

Ed Soltero, AIA, works with the UTEP's planning and construction office. He also is a *Texas Architect* contributing editor.



Canal Street Catalyst

by DONNA KACMAR, AIA





WHILE the need is great, new low-income apartments aren't easy to come by in Houston's inner city. The new Canal Street Apartments in Houston's Second Ward respond to that need with a well-designed complex of 133 single-room occupancy (SRO) rental units. The project was commissioned by New Hope Housing, Inc., a nonprofit corporation founded in 1993 to provide SRO apartments for low-income adults who choose to live alone.

When New Hope's leaders began searching for a site, former Houston City Council member Felix Fraga steered them toward the Second Ward in the area known as the East End. Working with a local real estate broker, they found an oddly shaped site bounded on one side by Canal Street and with one edge next to the original Ninfa's restaurant on Navigation Boulevard. The neighborhood's median annual income is \$10,500, which signaled to New Hope's leadership that there was a need for affordable housing to improve, or at least stabilize, the low-income community.

Joy Horak-Brown, New Hope's executive director, put together an architecture advisory committee and invited the participation of neighborhood residents to ensure their involvement in decisions about the development and design of the complex. "Neighborhood residents were excited to be a part of the design process and had clear ideas of what they did and didn't want," Horak-Brown says. "Mostly, they didn't want anything that lacked quality and durability. Everyone wanted to feel proud of the product 10 and 20 years out, not just at the grand opening. In the end, the process was productive and fun." The inclusive approach proved successful, resulting in the local community's support of the project.

The architectural selection process began with a request for qualifications from New Hope's board led by Michael M. Fowler and Ernesto L. Maldonado, AIA. Every architect who submitted qualifications was interviewed. The board ultimately commissioned Val Glitsch, FAIA, largely due to her reputation for imbuing unique sites with a sense of place, her meticulous attention to detail, and her ability to finish projects on time and within budget. Board members also wanted an architect who was comfortable working with a diverse group of stakeholders, could work through the complicated land use agreements, and would work well with the builder. The construction manager at risk, Camden Builders of Houston, negotiated with the client early in the design phase, and the project manager continued to involve the local community by committing to hire many construction workers who live in the neighborhood.

Glitsch began her pre-design session with the advisory group by showing slides of many different housing typologies, including courtyard schemes and images of Houston's beloved Isabella Courts apartment building. She also fabricated a large site model that depicted some of the project's con-

PROJECT Canal Street Apartments (New Hope Housing), Houston

CLIENT New Hope Housing

ARCHITECT Val Glitsch, FAIA

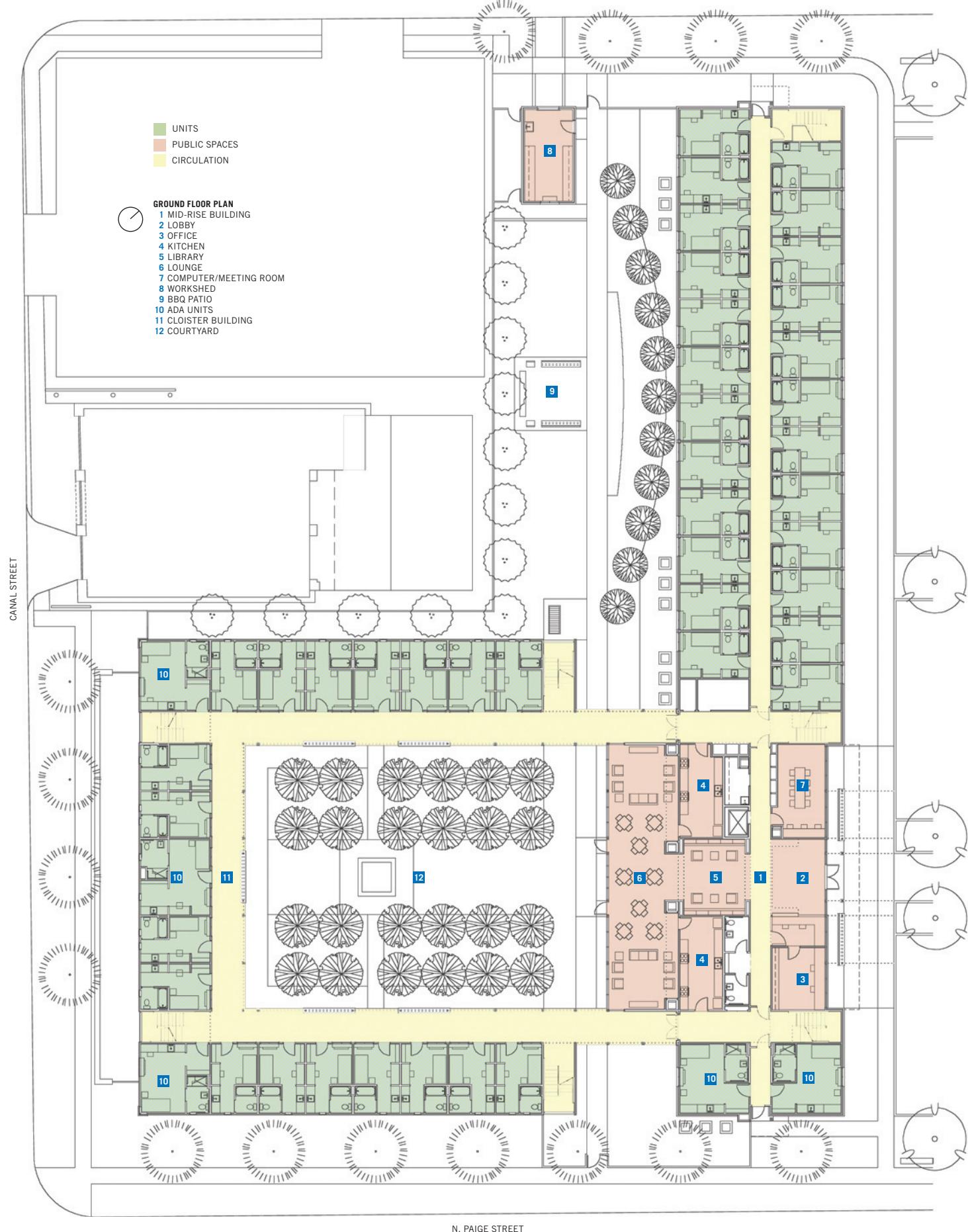
DESIGN TEAM Val Glitsch, FAIA; Monica Savino, intern; Karen Lantz, intern

CONTRACTOR Camden Builders, Inc.

CONSULTANTS Conti Jumper Gardner & Associates (structural); Jones Engineers (MEP); Karen Rose Engineering & Surveying (civil); Asakura Robinson (landscape); Mary McDaniel (furnishings)

PHOTOGRAPHERS Miro Dvorscak; Val Glitsch, FAIA

(opposite page) Transparency was important to the client. The openness of the circulation connection between the two-story 'cloister' and the mid-rise building allows residents to see activity on the street and neighbors to see into the courtyard. (this page) The public entrance is on the north side of the mid-rise building.





text—mainly small wood-frame houses and concrete-block commercial boxes. While Glitsch says she wanted to strengthen the pattern that already existed, she admits “the pattern had a lot of holes.” She eventually developed three schemes that took advantage of the 1.6-acre lot—actually an aggregation of nine rectangular lots combined into an irregular configuration. The selected courtyard scheme hugs the property’s outer edges to reinforce neighborhood connectivity.

The completed complex demonstrates successful application of some features that were very important to the client, such as limiting entry through one controlled-access portal where staff members are on site 24 hours each day. Other features were important to the architect, such as maintaining visual connections to neighborhood activities beyond the building. For example, the openings for exterior stairs provide views of life on the street. There also is a large public balcony positioned for views of downtown, yet the communal courtyard remains very much a private space that is visually connected to the neighborhood but offers a more protected environment due to its inward focus. The serene design of the courtyard and building landscape by landscape architect Keiji Asakura of Houston requires very little maintenance.

Encompassing 41,267 square feet, the facility is composed of a three-story bar that runs along the east/west axis of the site and a two-story U-shaped building that sits close to the street edges and encloses the courtyard. Materials were chosen for their permanence and ease of maintenance. The larger-scale masonry helps to reduce the building’s overall mass and provides a pattern that is not too fussy. In addition to the concrete masonry units, Glitsch selected two colors of glazed masonry for the exterior and carried those same colors inside with other materials. The exterior materials also reference the building’s context, with the masonry corresponding to the concrete-block boxes down the street and colored stucco on the upper wall surfaces complementing that used on surrounding buildings. The red-shingle roof is an abstraction of the tile roof of the neighborhood

As viewed from the eastern edge of the courtyard, the mid-rise building to the right holds the public spaces and the ‘cloister’ on the left houses the private residences.



(top left) The residential component of the building, shown at the southeast corner, features a small fenced area of yard that runs along busy Canal Street. **(top right)** A typical 210-sf apartment within the 133-unit complex.



wanted but could not afford to build or maintain. The exterior spaces are bounded by wiggly-wire galvanized mesh fence and rail panels. Interiors feature simple birch cabinetry and linoleum set in lively patterns that incorporate the color palette of the glazed masonry.

This building, while being designed and built within a tight budget, also is sensitive to its environment and projects a sense of neighborliness. Built on an existing, deteriorated urban site, the complex creates new green spaces, limits the amount of land used for parking lots and building footprints, and reduces light pollution to the night sky. In addition, abundant natural light and natural ventilation contribute to an overall feeling of friendliness for the building occupants. "Val's design engenders a strong sense of community with its expanses of glass on two levels," New Hope's Horak-Brown says. "It invites the neighborhood in and makes the neighborhood visible from inside the building, so that all who live or work there feel a part of the community."

The Canal Street Apartments is home to a diverse group of men (who account for 70 percent of the occupants) and women aged 18 and through their sixties, with the majority of residents between the ages of 30 and 49. Fifty-two percent are African American, 31 percent are Caucasian, and 17 percent are Hispanic. Sixty-three percent are employed, 25 percent of residents are veterans, and 46 percent receive federal benefits either through Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, or the Veterans Administration. Each fully furnished, 210-sq. ft. unit rents for \$355 per month (including utilities), with shared gathering spaces for dining, cooking, socializing, laundry, and learning skills, as well as generous outdoor spaces.

New Hope has two other properties located nearby—the proximity allows the sharing of staff and services among the facilities. Combined, the three facilities have a total of 319 SRO units, and New Hope's strategic plan calls for eventually developing a total of 1,000 units. New Hope Housing is currently looking for two more sites, most probably in the Second Ward. (Houston currently has less than 1,000 SRO units, but the city has identified a need for as many as 7,000 units.)

Developers are becoming increasingly interested in the East End, and many property owners with land adjacent to the Canal Street complex have reinvested in their own properties. Niel Morgan, a developer and current owner of the original Ninfa's, is about to open a restaurant there. A nearby



loft project is almost complete and a tax credit project is underway. Other projects in the immediate vicinity include: the Buffalo Bayou Partnership's plans to increase the amount of public amenities located along the bayou just east of downtown; and in 2002 Trammel Crow purchased the Alexan Lofts, a former furniture factory and warehouse complex on Runnels Street, and worked with architect Hensly, Lamkin, Rachel of Dallas to expand the number of residential units there to a total of 224. Also, the Greater East End Management District and the Houston East End Chamber of Commerce recently released a report, "The Greater East End Strategic Vision Project." The report was prepared by the University of Houston's Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture Community Design Resource Center to provide a framework for future development of the area that is intended to preserve "the unique history, character, identity, and culture" of each neighborhood. The Canal Street Apartments are mentioned in the report, along with recently completed street improvements and other planned projects (including METRO's Solutions East End Corridor and several streetscape improvements) that further the transition of this strategic vision from plan to reality.

Certainly the East End is undergoing significant change, and the cost of land continues to rise, which will require further complex undertakings such as New Hope Housing experienced on Canal Street. This development can be seen as a model for success due to community input, the right mix of private and public funding, a creative architect and client, and a strong-willed group to actively lead the project. **T**

Donna Kacmar, AIA, is principal of architect works, inc. in Houston and teaches architecture at the University of Houston.

(opposite page) The library that opens onto the court-yard is among the communal amenities.

RESOURCES MASONRY UNITS: Southwest Concrete Products; GLAZED MASONRY UNITS: Eagle-Cordell Concrete Products; METAL AWNING COVER: MBCI; PRE-FABRICATED WOOD JOINTS AND TRUSSES: Trussway; GLASS-FIBER REINFORCED PLASTICS: American Acrylic Corporation; SHINGLES: GAF Materials; FASCIA AND SOFFIT PANELS: James Hardie Siding Products; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Ceco; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Vistawall; METAL WINDOWS: Champion; GLASS: PPG; TILE: Daltile; AWNINGS: Avadek; OUTDOOR DECK FURNITURE: Landscape Forms

A Progressive Look Back

by GREG IBÁÑEZ, AIA



PROJECT Russell Creek Family YMCA, Plano

CLIENT YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas

ARCHITECT Good Fulton & Farrell Architects

DESIGN TEAM David Michael Farrell, AIA; Lance Braht, AIA; Scott A. Sower, AIA; Scott Wegener, AIA; Elizabeth Parham

CONTRACTOR Constructors

CONSULTANTS Raymond L. Goodson Jr. (civil, structural); Schmidt & Stacy (MEP); SMR (landscape)

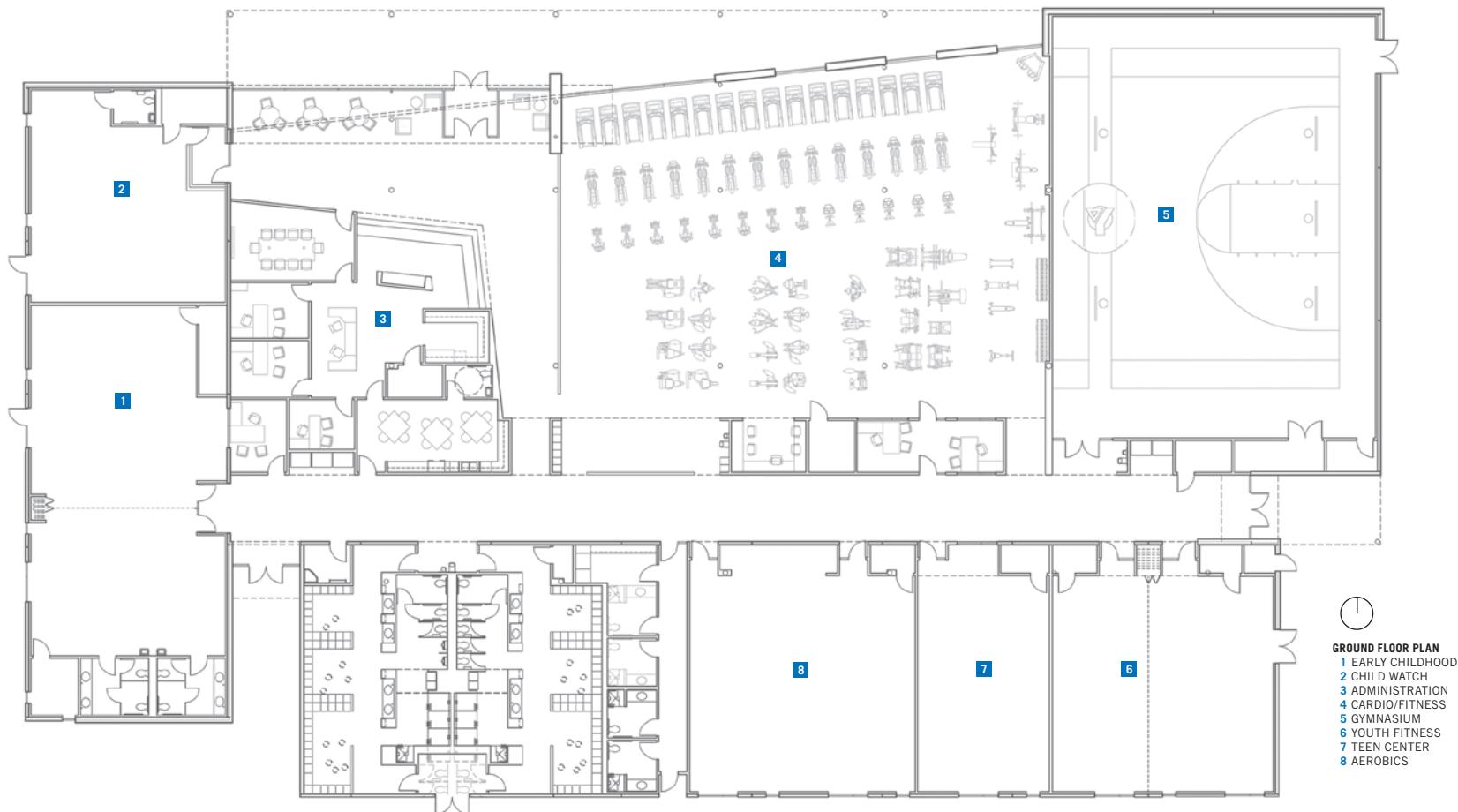
PHOTOGRAPHER Charles D. Smith, AIA

Under a generous protective overhang at the entry, abundant glazing welcomes members and visitors into the airy interior space. Inside, the steel structure is clearly expressed and the architects' no-nonsense approach to the design is apparent.

OVER the last decade or so, “context” has become a prime determinant of form and materials in much of our architecture. As any architect who has appeared before a design review board can attest, it is a sacred tenet when judging the “appropriateness” of a given solution. Unfortunately, it has also become an easy rationale for non-critical architectural thinking. As the esteemed critic Ada Louise Huxtable so eloquently stated, “The fallacy of contextualism, the masquerade of matched materials, the cosmetic cover-up of architectural *maquillage* meant to make a building ‘fit’ surroundings that frequently change, are a trap into which many architects jump or fall.”

Of course, being a good architectural neighbor is a virtue, especially in dense urban areas. We expect good buildings to respect the street, acknowledge history, etc. But what about sites that offer a “context” that is widely considered banal, soulless, or even unhealthy? There is currently no more discussed and derided locale than the contemporary suburban environment, which is charged with being nothing more than a collection of big-box strip centers, mega-churches, and generic housing developments sprawled behind miles of faux-brick walls—a nonplace where the profligate use of SUVs has made us obese and oil-dependent. Despite the validity of much of the critiques, the reality is complex. The north Dallas suburb of Plano, for example, has a surprisingly diverse citizenry, is blessed with excellent public schools, and enjoys proximity to major employment centers.





(opposite page, counterclockwise from top) Glazed block in vibrant colors comprises the north facade, with tilt-wall concrete panels used elsewhere. The color scheme corresponds with the YMCA's brand identity. Punched openings and storefront establish a simple vocabulary of design elements.

Therefore, when the architects of Good Fulton & Farrell in Dallas undertook the design of the Russell Creek branch of the YMCA, they might have responded to the acres of houses and retail centers with a scheme that featured a residential pitched roof and requisite red brick or emulated the glitz of commercial health clubs. Instead, they designed a modernist building that is undeniably contemporary while evoking the progressive spirit of the 1950s, a time when suburbia represented an optimistic vision of America's future.

And as in that era, the new building features a strong horizontal expression set on the gently rolling prairie and a generous use of color. The same glazed block panels that were ubiquitous in post-war elementary schools are employed here in a fresh manner as planes positioned along the entry facade. The bright panels, representing the YMCA brand colors, are washed with light in the evening for a vibrant "building as signage" effect. The architects recessed and skewed the glass and colored-block entry plane to provide an ample overhang. The overall effect conveys an inviting gesture to members and visitors.

Other than the aforementioned angled wall, the remaining structure is rectilinear, with tilt-wall concrete panels comprising all but the north facade. This allows the abundant use of glazing to gather the north light, as well as providing a welcoming transparency to the facility as viewed from the street and parking. Throughout, the exterior walls employ a simple vocabulary of punched openings and horizontal storefront. Clearly, this is a structure built with an economical budget and the architects are to be commended for using the limited funds wisely.

Inside, the white steel structure and ductwork are carefully organized and frankly expressed. Floors are mostly sealed concrete with the occasional etched "Y" logo. Reflecting the predominant demographic of its clientele, the child-care studio is located immediately off one end of the lobby. On the opposite side is the exercise and cardio area with treadmills enjoying framed views of the big Texas sky. Lighting in this tall space is basic, with suspended fluorescent fixtures ganged to reinforce the plan geometry. The internal configuration is essentially a longitudinal corridor accessing a small gymnasium and a variety of meeting and fitness rooms. Rear doors directly connect to outdoor volleyball courts and playing fields.

RESOURCES MASONRY UNITS: Trenwyth Industries; MEMBRANE ROOFING: GAF; FASCIA AND SOFFIT PANELS: Alcan; GLASS: Grizzly Glass (Arch Aluminum & Glass Co.); TILE: Daltile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong Ceiling Systems; ATHLETIC SURFACING (INDOOR): Dodge-Regupol; ATHLETIC WOOD FLOORING: Connor Floor; OPERABLE PARTITIONS: Modernfold; WATER PARK: Rain Drop Products



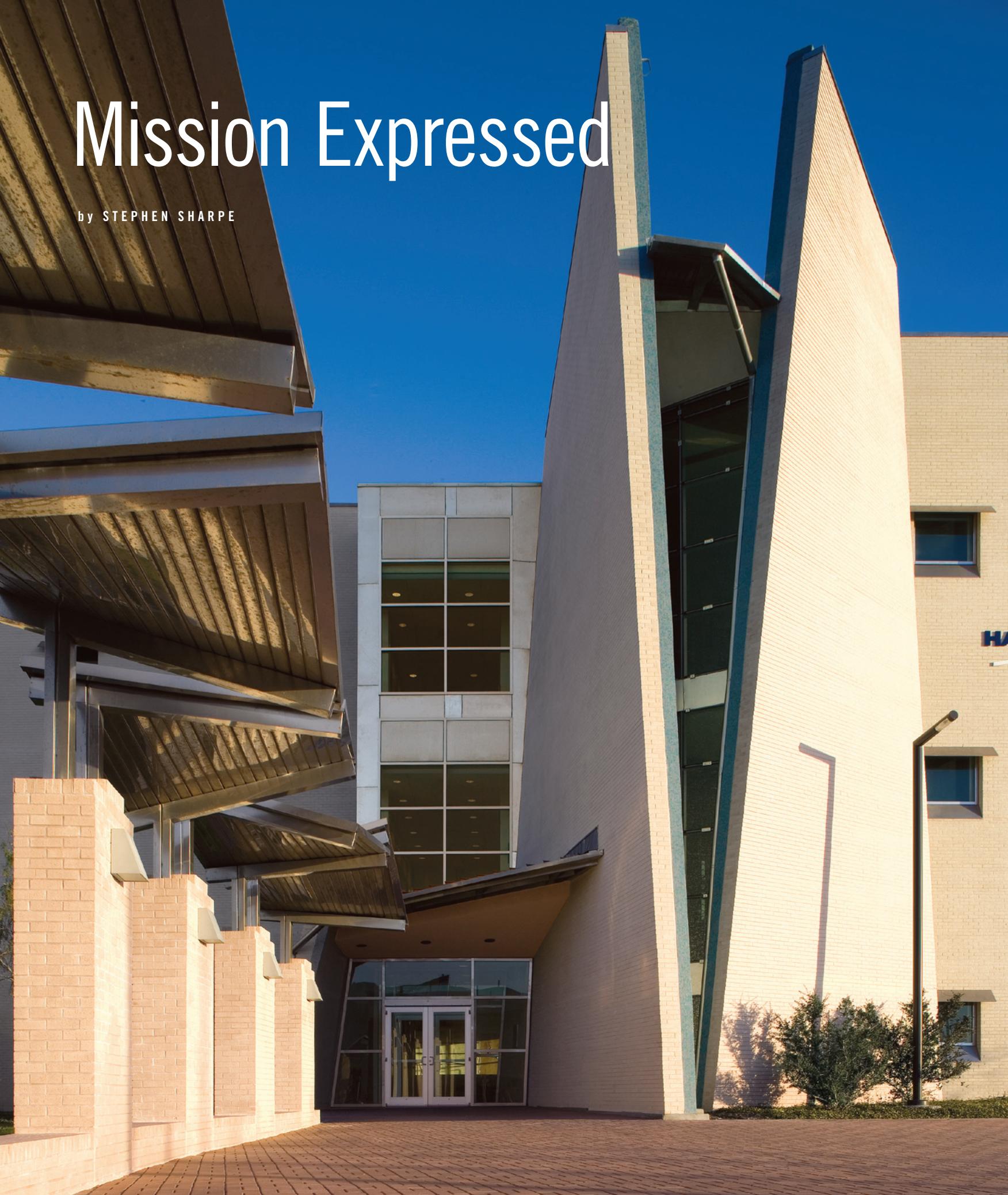
A reading of the program schedules indicates the diversity of activities – from kids' basketball to senior aerobics – and attests to the service mission of the facility. In the final analysis, maybe the fact that the Russell Creek YMCA does not mirror its' context in an architectural sense is a superficial reading of the situation. The building's warm colors and welcoming transparency reinforce the positive values that are the building blocks of healthy communities. **T**

Greg Ibañez, AIA, is a vice president of Gideon Toal and the Fort Worth firm's director of design. He also is a *Texas Architect* contributing editor.



Mission Expressed

by STEPHEN SHARPE





THE unique mission of the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies takes singular expression in its new headquarters on the campus of Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi. Located just a few miles from the Gulf, the perpetually windswept site is protected from the open sea by Mustang Island, the slender barrier island that buffers the South Texas coastline. Nature is omnipresent, its latent energy palpable in the salty breeze, its mysterious beauty pervasive but veiled by waves and sand. Considering the HRI's locale and purpose, there is little surprise that Richter Architects found inspiration for the design of the 57,000-sf facility in the surrounding marine environment.

Allusions to the Institute's purpose — the comprehensive study of the Gulf — materialize in obvious and subtle ways. A series of metal canopies resemble a school of fish swimming toward the entry. Walls three stories tall appear to twist as they enfold a monumental staircase like a giant upended clam shell. The stairwell's shimmering interior of bluish glass tile resembles seashell nacre. These images reflect both the organic and the technological aspects of marine biology, and the building rewards close inspection with moments of discovery that suggest the revelations of scientific research. "From a metaphorical point of view, we liked the idea of a building that is in one sense high-tech and precise but is countered with the more organic and expressive," says David Richter, FAIA, who designs with his partner/wife Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA, for the design that has intrigued their clients and challenged the project's contractors. The Richters' firm worked on the project in association with Houston-based Watkins Hamilton Ross Architects.

The new HRI headquarters, opened in November 2005 (although construction continued through early this year), reveals itself incrementally. The approach from the north along Ocean Drive from downtown Corpus Christi follows the gently curving bayside boulevard to Ward Island, home of the "island university," at the point where estuarial Oso Bay flows into Corpus Christi Bay.

PROJECT Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Corpus Christi

CLIENT Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi

ARCHITECT Richter Architects in association with WHR Architects

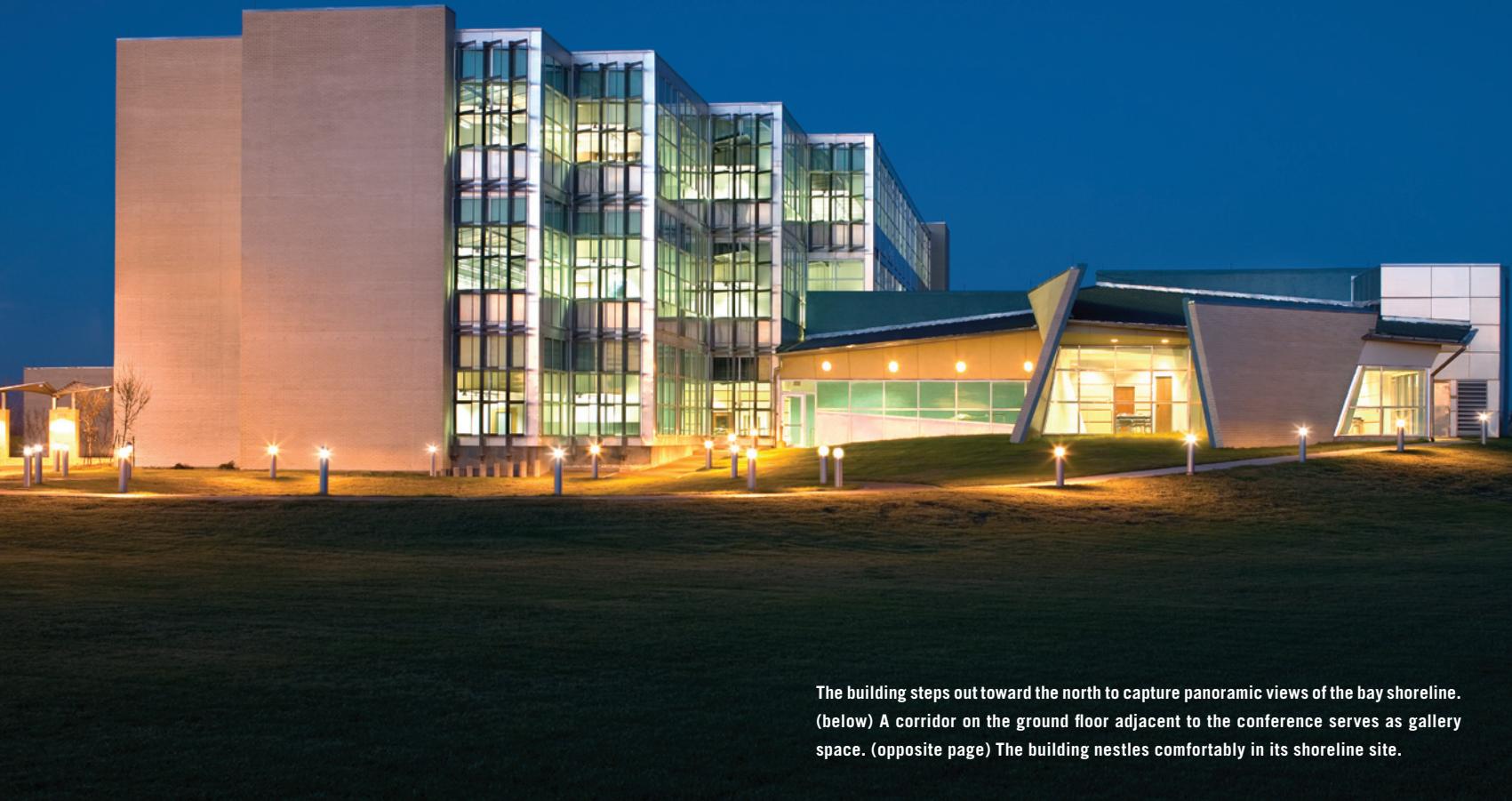
DESIGN TEAM David Richter, FAIA; Elizabeth Chu Richter, FAIA; Stephen Cox, AIA; Sam Morris, AIA; Peter Lotz, AIA; Jill Harmon, AIA

CONTRACTOR Zachry Construction

CONSULTANTS Walter P. Moore (structural); Shah Smith & Associates (MEP); Govind EC (civil); Research Facilities Design (lab consultant); JEAcoustics (acoustics); Facility Programming + Consulting (programming); Data Com Design Group (communications); SWA Group (landscape architecture); Project Cost Resources (cost estimating); PSI (environmental)

PHOTOGRAPHER Joe Aker

(opposite page) At the entry, images of marine life denote the HRI's research mission. The monumental walls, contorted into hyperbolic paraboloids, also convey the Institute's scientific pursuits. **(this page)** The ground-floor conference room is a venue for public outreach.



The building steps out toward the north to capture panoramic views of the bay shoreline. (below) A corridor on the ground floor adjacent to the conference serves as gallery space. (opposite page) The building nestles comfortably in its shoreline site.



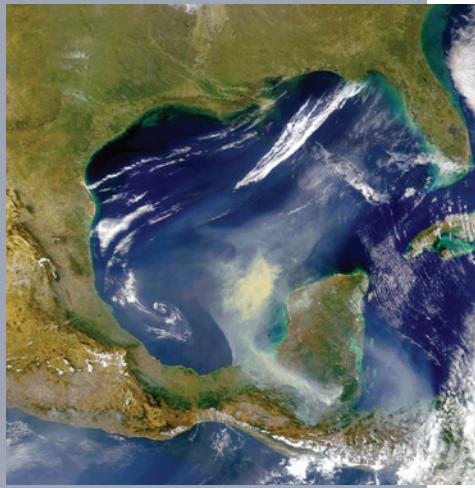
Positioned as the gateway landmark to the campus, the HRI makes an immediate impression with its gleaming exterior of buff brick and glass rising three stories above tenacious, weather-beaten turf. The site offers an almost ideal orientation for the north-side elevation to look out toward Corpus Christi Bay while sustaining minimal impact from the withering effects of the South Texas sun.

The Richters took every advantage of the site to design a building that benefits from abundant natural light while maintaining an overall energy efficiency by limiting openings on the southern and western elevations. "In any project you have to be inspired by the site, especially a site as good as this one," David Richter, said in an interview with a campus publication. "But you also must have environmental sensitivity aside from just responding to the site. The building must be well tuned to the sun, wind, and other elements."

The building's envelope of buff brick corresponds with the campus' standard exterior material palette. Initially developed in the 1950s and '60s as the University of Corpus Christi, the campus' original buildings are small boxes configured to create shaded courtyards for protection against the elements. In 1993 the school officially became part of the Texas A&M System. The Richters credit TAMU-CC President Dr. Robert R. Furgason with asking architects to push the aesthetic boundaries when designing new buildings for the growing campus. (Furgason now serves as director of the Harte Research Institute.) The Richters took the challenge and



FOCUS ON THE GULF



COURTESY HARTE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

decided to use the campus' ubiquitous off-white brick "and use it in an extraordinary and expressive way," Elizabeth Chu Richter says.

The bulk of HRI's laboratories and administrative support offices is contained within a long, narrow three-story tower set on an east-west axis. Executive office suites are located at one end of the top floor. At ground level other programmed spaces are aligned on a northeast-southwest axis, with seawater labs at the back of the building near the loading dock and public spaces spread out at the front to allow views of Corpus Christi Bay.

Seen along its narrow eastern elevation the building appears as a solid three-story wall of masonry from which a series of four tall glass boxes step out toward the north, each box projecting further than the one before. This stepped tactic gradually increases the depth of the building as the northern face of the sequential boxes grows wider as they march across the building's broad bayside frontage, while also admitting morning light into conference rooms and offices. To mediate the intended exposure to direct sunlight, the architects designed sunshades that were ultimately omitted from the project.

Along the north facade, large windows at the top two levels bathe the open-plan offices with soft, indirect sunlight. The open workspace allows more people to share the daylight and views of the bay, an egalitarian approach that encourages collaboration and exchange among colleagues. The architects devised a strategy to extend perimeter daylight as deep as possible into the building through the combination of reflective metal ceiling panels, suspended light shelves, and a series of transoms along the corridor wall. The corridors serve as the circulation spine that runs the length of the building on each level, effectively bisecting it between office side and lab side. Laboratories are more opaque along their side of the corridor yet their interiors also gain sufficient natural light from strategically placed south-side windows shielded by thin, stainless steel exterior eyebrows above each opening. Taking into account the solar orientation and the lab setting, the windows, at slightly larger than three-feet square, appear as a generous gesture to the scientists and students who probably are accustomed to working under less favorable conditions.

While the workspaces are designed to be more than merely functional and comfortable for those conducting research there, the architects also were driven to create a building that sends a message to the general public. "The building becomes a symbol of the mission to the public. It does that by being an expressive building and by having public spaces to convey that mission to the public," says David Richter. The symbolic aspects of the building's design, he adds, were specifically intended to further HRI's goals to direct in governmental policy in regards to the ecosystems of the Gulf of Mexico. To that end, the Richters' wanted their design to attract visitors to the HRI so the non-sci-

The Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies is developing into the innovative, interdisciplinary research facility. With a gift of \$46 million in 2000 and the charge to "make a difference," Corpus Christi philanthropist Edward H. Harte set the researchers on their mission to support and advance the long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Gulf of Mexico. The Institute is currently establishing research programs – coastal and marine policy and law; marine biodiversity and conservation science; ecosystems studies and modeling; marine geographic information systems (GIS); ocean and human health; and socioeconomics – to achieve these goals:

- To become a leading research institute and remain committed to high-quality, innovative research on the Gulf of Mexico.
- To lead in synthesizing, integrating, and communicating Gulf of Mexico research.
- To monitor and periodically publicize the "State of the Gulf" to uncover gaps in existing knowledge and to create initiatives to fill those gaps.
- To cooperate with state and federal resource management agencies by providing scientifically based knowledge for sound policy and management of the Gulf of Mexico and surrounding region.
- To establish partnerships and alliances with educational, governmental, and private sector organizations interested in long-term sustainable use and conservation of the Gulf of Mexico.
- To develop strong public education and public policy programs, using diverse approaches such as a Web site and conferences.
- To develop a Gulf-wide GIS
- To foster tri-national cooperation and collaboration in science and management of the Gulf of Mexico.
- To study the conservation biology and biodiversity of the Gulf of Mexico.
- To study the Gulf of Mexico as a large marine ecosystem, influenced by the Caribbean Sea and surrounding watersheds, requiring monitoring, modeling, and management.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
 1 MAIN ENTRANCE
 2 CONFERENCE CENTER
 3 GALLERY
 4 EDUCATION OUTREACH
 5 TEACHING LAB
 6 SEAWATER LAB
 7 STORAGE/SUPPORT
 8 LOADING DOCK
 9 SEAWATER LAB & WORKSHOP
 10 GRADUATE INSTRUCTION/RESEARCH OFFICES

THIRD FLOOR PLAN
 1 OFFICES
 2 WETLAB
 3 DRYLAB
 4 GRADUATE INSTRUCTION AND
 RESEARCH OFFICES
 5 ADMINISTRATION



entists among the general public would understand the objectives of the Institute's research. "You can't affect policy without public support," David Richter says. "I wanted people to feel intrigued by the building and feel that it is beautiful," Elizabeth Chu Richter adds. "We wanted to design a building that people want to go into and learn more about."

To understand HRI's mission themselves, the Richters attended a meeting of the Institute's tri-national advisory council in 2003 as the architects were just beginning the design phase. Elizabeth Chu Richter took notes, jotting down terms that surfaced as key reference points in the discussions. Her list included phrases that spoke to the Institute's outreach goals, such as "excite the public," "imagine," and "inspire public interest," along with other words keyed to scientific exploration and understanding the Gulf's ecosystems. When they left that meeting, the architects were excited at the prospect of designing a landmark building to further the HRI's cause, as David Richter says, "that was up to the task that the Institute wants to accomplish." ■

Stephen Sharpe is editor of *Texas Architect*.

Natural light from the north extends deep into the building through transoms, suspended light shelves, and reflective ceiling panels. The central corridor separates the office suites from laboratories on the building's south side.

RESOURCES CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE: Ingram Readymix; MASONRY UNITS: Southwest Concrete Products; BRICK: Acme Brick; RAILINGS AND HANDRAILS: Hoffa; WATERPROOFING AND DAMPROOFING: Sonneborn; ROOF AND WALL PANELS: G.M. Horne & Company; EXTERIOR WALL PANELS: Alply; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: American Door Products; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: Texas Glass and Tinting; METAL WINDOWS: EFCO Corporation; TILE/GLASS TILE: Daltile; SPECIAL CEILING SURFACES: Ecophon; SIGNAGE AND GRAPHICS: Corpus Christi Stamp Works



Rescue in the Park

by GERALD MOORHEAD, FAIA



PROJECT Harris County Youth Services Center, Houston

CLIENT Harris County

ARCHITECT Page Southerland Page

DESIGN TEAM Jeff Bricker, AIA; Blair Satterfield; Robert Owens, AIA; David Lidsky, AIA; Joanna Yaghooti; Laura Smith, AIA

CONTRACTOR Duratech

CONSULTANTS Haynes Whaley (structural); I.A. Naman (MEP); JNS (civil); Knudson & Associates (landscape); MCM, Rolf Jensen (security); Worrell Design Group (kitchen)

PHOTOGRAPHERS Hester + Hardaway; Gerald Moorhead, FAIA

(this page) The shared and economical material palette establishes a functional order to the series of buildings. (opposite page) The architects used two types of windows for further economy: a rectangular shape playfully employed in a rotating sequence, and a large picture window to define public spaces.

ABUSED, neglected, and arrested kids in Harris County now take the first steps to a more normal life in a multi-service facility set in a public park. Protection, shelter, food, health care, and schooling are provided at the centralized location of the new Harris County Youth Services Center, housing a number of county agencies, designed by the Houston office of Page Southerland Page.

The 80-acre park in west Houston retains memories of its use as rice fields and dairy pasture, with drainage canals and rows of trees. Half the park was used for the center, while the remainder serves as community play space. The design of the center takes advantage of this undeveloped space by opening itself and drawing the site, its trees and vistas, deep into and through the complex. A series of linear buildings, efficiently planned with rows of rooms, are splayed apart to let in the park and laced together with a circulation spine. With this open planning, most offices have daylight and views to the park or a court. The individual buildings also give each agency both the required separation and direct connection to shared services. While the interior and exterior materials are frugally consistent, bold colors identify the lobby and core spaces of each agency and entrances are identified by bright green glazed tile modules pinched between the angled buildings.

The design gives a functional order to the numerous agencies within a shared vocabulary of metal siding, dark brick, and green glazed tile. The scheme thrifitly uses only two window types: a rectangular shape that is used horizontally, vertically, recessed, or projected, and a large picture window associated with public spaces. The feel of the place is more like a low-key corporate campus than a government facility. And while lacking the expected hominess of a residential shelter, the Youth Services Center is a less confrontational environment than usually found in custodial agencies, hopefully making it easier to bring normalcy to the troubled children of Harris County. ■

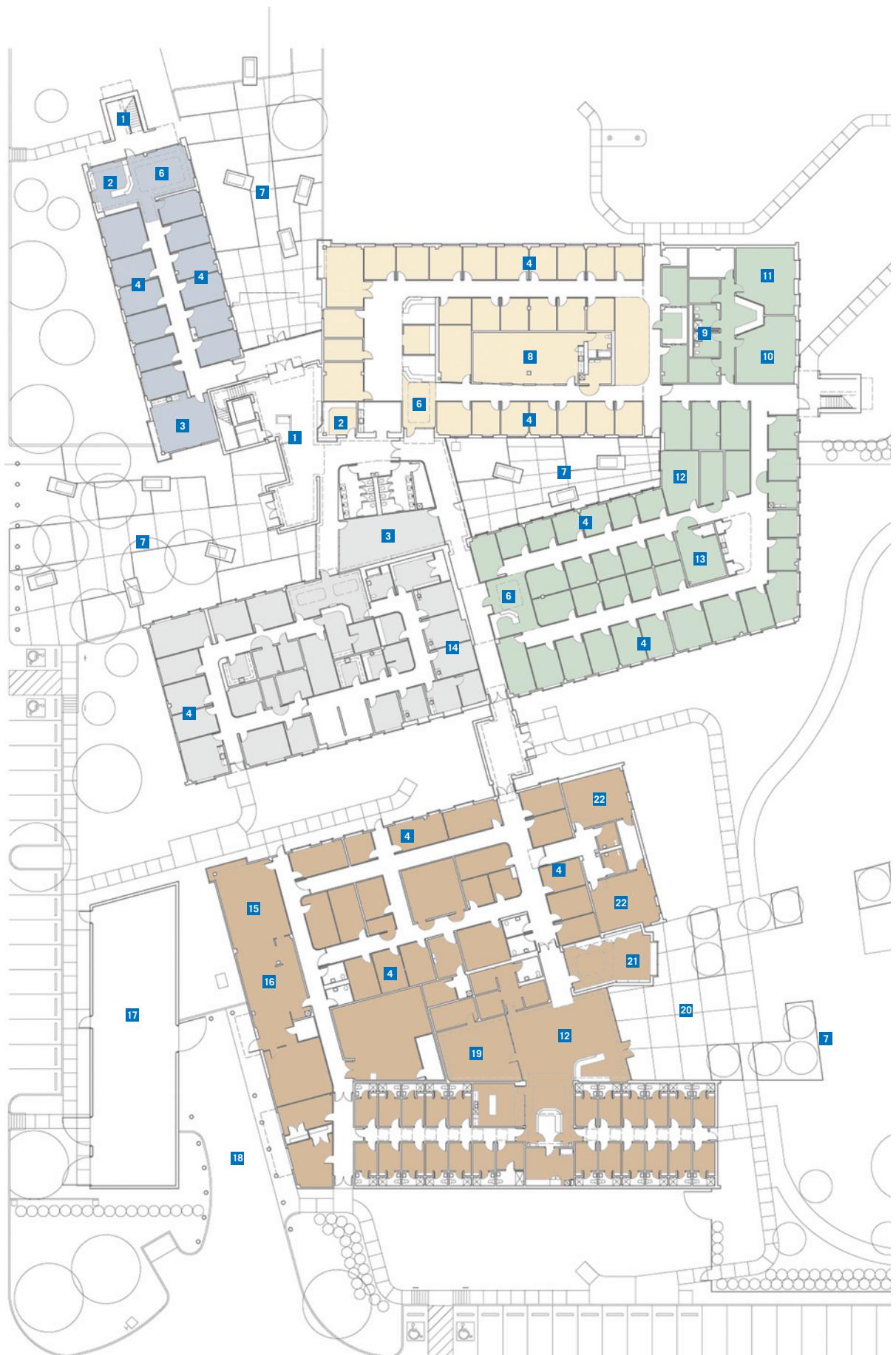
Gerald Moorhead, FAIA, is a contributing editor of *Texas Architect*.



CROSSROADS
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 TRIAD
 CLINIC
 SHELTER

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- 1 ENTRY KIOSK
- 2 RECEPTION
- 3 MEETING
- 4 OFFICE
- 5 BALCONY
- 6 LOBBY
- 7 GARDEN
- 8 OVERNIGHT CARE
- 9 OBSERVATION
- 10 BOYS HOLDING
- 11 GIRLS HOLDING
- 12 SOLARIUM
- 13 MECHANICAL
- 14 EXAM
- 15 CAFETERIA
- 16 KITCHEN
- 17 MECHANICAL YARD
- 18 LOADING DOCK
- 19 GAME ROOM
- 20 PATIO
- 21 LIBRARY
- 22 CLASSROOM





(above) Comfortable yet inexpensively finished interior spaces have the feel of a low-key corporate campus and create a less confrontational environment than usually found in custodial institutions. (left) Courts and courtyards draw the park landscape between the wings of the complex.



R E S O U R C E S BRICK PAVERS: Pacific Clay Products; COLORED CONCRETE: Kemiko Concrete Stain; MASONRY UNITS: Pacific Clay Products; UNIT MASONRY WALL ASSEMBLIES: Pacific Clay Products; COUNTERTOPS: DuPont Corian Products; COMPOSITE ALUMINUM PANELS: Alcan Composites; METAL SIDING: Centria Architectural Systems; CORRUGATED PANELS: Centria Architectural Systems; GLASS: PPG; TILE: Daltile; ACOUSTICAL CEILINGS: Armstrong; METAL CEILINGS: Armstrong Metalworks; RESILIENT FLOORING: Armstrong; OPERABLE PARTITIONS: Panelfold

"CIVIC SUBSTANCE" continued from page 23

and build a high-rise in place of the post office. Novare also owns land in the block immediately to the west, and plans to encompass an expanded post office and parking within a second condominium tower.

City officials are doing everything they can to encourage the new density in the downtown, at the expense of the spatial codes originally implemented to maintain urban scale and continuity. Regulating devices such as height restrictions and other form-based codes established by the Second Street District have been cast aside in favor of facilitating the new development. The drawback may yet be the realization of an urban space that will never achieve the civic character befitting of one of Austin's most important urban parks. Whether the Downtown Great Streets Plan, a document that only structures the surface and not the volume of the city, has the ability to pull it all together remains to be seen. But after decades of unfulfilled promise, new development around Republic Square seems to be finally on the verge of establishing its long-promised civic identity. As the various proposals become more concrete, what remains unclear is whether all this development will add up to something more than just an assembly of buildings, but a true civic heart capable of anchoring the fledgling sense of urbanity that Austin so badly desires.

Dean Almy is director of landscape architecture and urban design in the University of Texas at Austin's School of Architecture.



Austin's new U.S. Courthouse will open to Republic Square on its east side. Despite security setbacks, the park is expected to be integrated into the courthouse's program; rendering by Mack Scoggin and Merrill Elam Architects courtesy GSA.



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PROJECT Lee P. Brown METRO Administration Building and Transit Center, Houston

CLIENT Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County

ARCHITECT PGAL

CONTRACTOR Manhattan Construction Co.

CONSULTANTS Walter P. Moore (structural); Scientech Engineers (structural); JGM (canopy and transit center); Clark Condon Associates (landscaping); ESPA Corp (civil); I.A. Naman & Associates (MEP)

PHOTOGRAPHER Dana Hoff

Designed by PGAL, the Lee P. Brown METRO Administration Building combines administrative services and public operations for the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) into a single 400,000-sf location. The lobby level of the 14-story structure serves as part of the public transit center, including an information center, store, and METRO police station. The outside portion of the transit center provides access to a METRORail light rail station and a barrel vault-covered bus area, evocative of traditional European train sheds. The facility relies on energy-conserving concepts such as natural ventilation

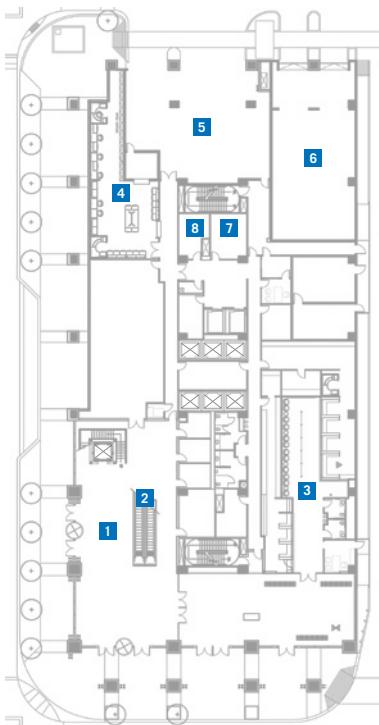
and use of daylighting throughout the building. Window glazing decreases the amount of solar heat entering the building, which reduces electrical demand and overall energy costs. Completed in 2005, this \$41 million project aims to provide a more inviting alternative to the Houston area car commute.

COURTNEY LOCH

RESOURCES CONCRETE PAVEMENT: ToungYang (cement), Hanson (aggregate), Headwaters (fly ash); CONCRETE MATERIALS: Hanson South Texas Concrete; PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE: HAKCO Precast; SITE, STREET AND MALL FURNISHINGS: Landscape Forms; MASONRY UNITS: Southwest Concrete Products; STONE: American Stone Company; ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK: Architectural Metal Crafts; ORNAMENTAL METAL RAILS AND STAIRS: Berger Ironworks; MEMBRANE ROOFING: Garland Company; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: Ceco (doors), Door Pro Systems (frames); WOOD AND PLASTIC DOORS AND FRAMES: VT Industries; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: US Aluminum; GLASS: Viracon; GLAZED CURTAINWALL: Ranger Glass of San Antonio; STRUCTURAL GLASS CURTAINWALL: BJ Swango System; TILE: Marazzi (floor), Interceramic (wall); TERRAZZO: American Stone Company; METAL CEILINGS: Ceilings Plus; ACOUSTICAL TREATMENTS: Architectural Fabric Systems; OPERABLE PARTITIONS: Kwik-Wall



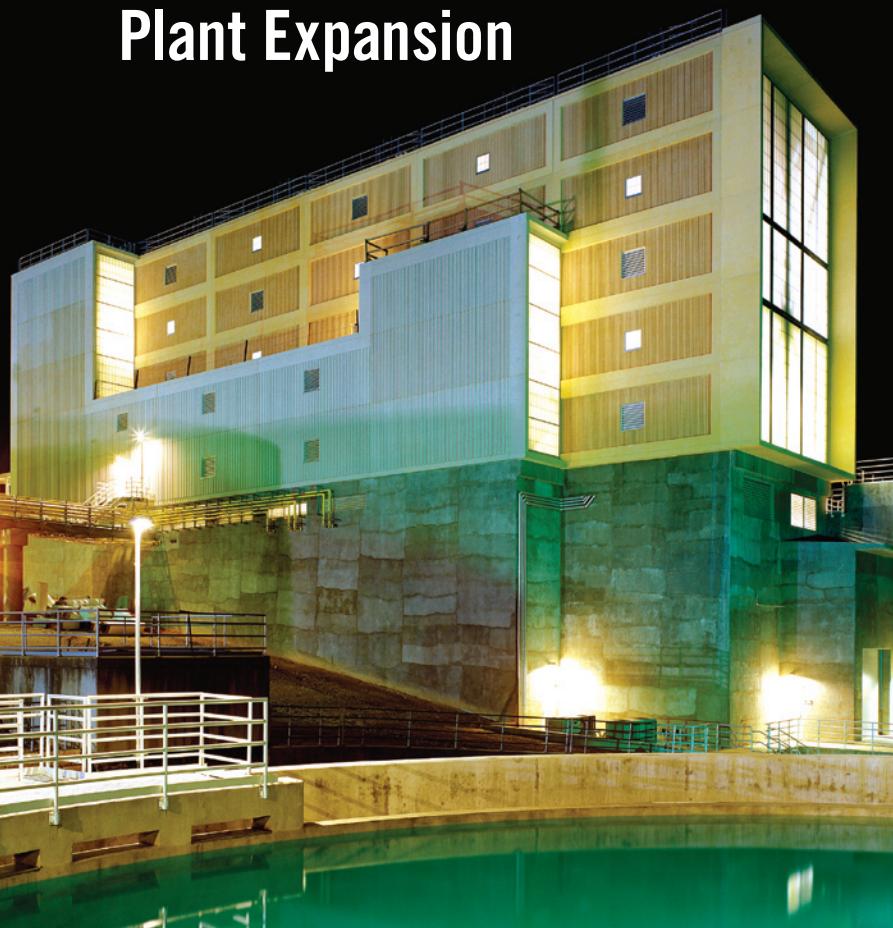
METRO Administration Building



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- 1 MAIN ENTRY
- 2 ESCALATOR
- 3 RIDESTORE
- 4 MAIL ROOM
- 5 LOADING DOCK
- 6 RAMP TO GARAGE BELOW
- 7 MECHANICAL
- 8 ELECTRICAL

Ullrich Water Treatment Plant Expansion



PROJECT Ullrich Water Treatment Plant Expansion, Austin

CLIENT City of Austin

ARCHITECT Casabella Architects

CONTRACTOR Archer Western Contractors

CONSULTANTS Jose I. Guerra, Inc. (structural); Axiom-Blair (civil); Camp Dresser & McKee (process mechanical, plumbing, and HVAC); Haratunian Engineering (electrical I&C); Archillume (lighting); Aan Coleman & Associates (landscape)

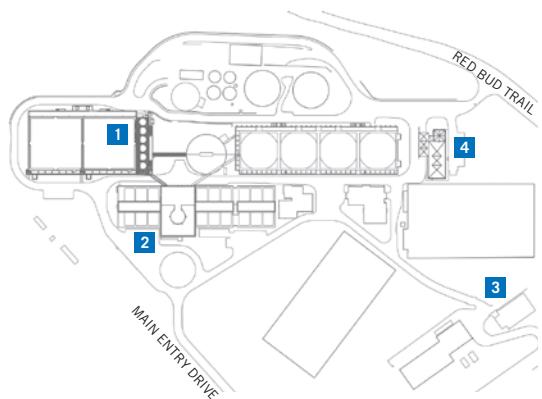
PHOTOGRAPHER Mike Osborne

In constructing the \$72 million Ullrich Water Treatment Plant expansion, the design team faced the challenge of addressing the community's concerns while still adhering to the programmatic requirements. Local residents wanted a design that would not detract from the existing aesthetic of the neighborhood and were concerned that a new multi-story building might obstruct their skyline views. To minimize the upper part of the building, all accessory equipment is located in the lower portion. As a result, the height of the building was reduced by 15 feet and the five new lime silos were allowed to protrude beyond the roof, thereby lessening the overall box appearance. The benefits

of a lower building height are two-fold: most residents still have downtown views and the roof becomes a cost-effective solution for accessing the tops of the silos. Another major concern of residents was the effect of site lighting on nearby homes. In order to reduce light pollution and still provide adequate security lighting, a translucent material was installed on the building's north facade. Ample natural light enters the building during the day, and interior lights emit a soft glow at night. Completed in 2007, this 45,090-sf expansion achieves its goal of increased productivity without unnecessary intrusion into the neighborhood.

COURTNAY LOCH

RESOURCES CONCRETE PAVEMENT: Aaron Concrete, Orr Concrete; PRECAST ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE: Meridian Precast & Granite; MASONRY UNITS: Acme Brick; METAL DECKING: Vulcraft; RAILINGS AND HANDRAILS: Cody Builders; ROOF AND WALL PANELS: Kalwall; MEMBRANE ROOFING: Johns-Manville; METAL DOORS AND FRAMES: DFW Door; SPECIALTY DOORS: Cornell; TERRAZZO: National Terrazzo Tile & Marble; ARCHITECTURAL LOUVERS: Greenheck



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
1 LIME HANDLING BUILDING
2 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
3 ELECTRICAL BUILDING
4 CHEMICAL STORAGE BUILDING

Metal Shines as Design Solution

Clients benefit from durability and low life-cycle costs of metal walls and roofs

by TOY HENSON



WHEN architects and building owners require an attractive and affordable roof or wall system for a commercial or institutional project, chances are metal will be at or near the top of their list of material candidates. To be sure, there's no shortage of commercial metal roof or wall systems from which to choose. And metal is extremely competitive with other exterior facade options because of its low life-cycle cost.

The improved thermal performance of metal wall and roof systems can provide significant savings in a building owner's energy costs. Moreover, the light weight of these materials makes them especially cost effective in multi-story tower additions because of the significant savings they generate due to lower structural loading requirements. Their long-term durability and reduced maintenance costs also yield significant economic dividends for building owners.

Discovery Springs Medical Center in Middleton, Wis., is clad with more than 20,000 square feet of aluminum composite wall panels to convey a high-tech image. The sleek look was requested by its lead healthcare tenants, including a major dental and cosmetic surgery practice.

Metal roofs and walls contribute significantly to the "green" building movement because of their high recycled content, recyclability, sustainability, and energy efficiency. For example, at least 25 percent of the steel used in today's metal roofs and walls has been recycled. This level of recycled content reduces both the cost and environmental impact of making new steel since it conserves energy and lowers requirements for natural raw materials. The use of recycled steel also helps earn points in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental De-

sign (LEED) program, a nation-wide rating system based on a series of prerequisites and points.

Other metals also are high in recycled content. For example, the recycled content of domestically produced flat, rolled aluminum construction products is between 80 and 85 percent. The average recycled content of all copper and zinc products is 44 percent and nine percent, respectively.

In addition to their recycled content, metal roof panels offer the added benefit of being recyclable at the end of their useful life. For example, while other old roofing materials are dumped in landfills by the ton, steel, aluminum, and zinc used in metal roof panels is 100 percent recyclable. Moreover, in many retrofit applications, metal roofs can be installed over old flat roofs. This eliminates the need to remove the old roofing material and helps to preserve valuable landfill space.

Building owners and architects have long recognized metal roofs and walls for their strength and functionality. Increasingly, they now also recognize their long sustainable service life. The longevity of today's metal roofs and walls can be attributed in large measure to a new generation of metal coating systems. Modern technology has made it possible for these systems to protect and beautify metal panels that are often warranted for 30 years or more. Metal roof and wall panels also are lightweight, resulting in reduced structural loads on a building. This, in turn, can extend the overall life of a facility.

Metal roofs and walls also have demonstrated an ability to reduce energy consumption. Metal roofs, for example, can be finished with heat-deflecting paints and coatings that lower energy usage by reducing cooling loads inside a building. These "cool metal roofs" also can reduce the urban heat island effect by lowering ambient outdoor temperatures. Today's cool metal roofs can reflect up to 70 percent of the sun's rays, resulting in less heat transfer to a building's interior, saving owners substantial energy costs. An Oak Ridge National Laboratory study shows that painted metal roofs maintain 95 percent of their reflectance value over time. This scientific data disproves some building code assumptions that reflective performance of all roof materials degrades at the same rate.

Metal Roofing

Metal roofs offer myriad choices of substrates, shapes, styles, profiles, colors, seam types, and module widths. These choices result in more visually interesting and architecturally satisfying buildings. Low-slope roofs, for example, offer a variety of seam types, height options, and texturing alternatives. These systems consist of interlocking panels, commonly called standing seam roofing, that run vertically along the roof surface. Metal roof panels generally come with a painted, mill finish, or a clear acrylic finish. A standing seam design assures adequate draining from rain and snow, effectively eliminating ponding, leaks, and related problems typically associated with built-up roofs.



The Church of the Holy Spirit in Bratislava, Slovakia, uses preweathered titanium zinc in a blue-gray tone. The material, altered to resemble naturally aged zinc, forms the 14,961-square-foot roof and the facade's angled standing-seam panels.

The growing emphasis on style has helped usher in a new category of roofs shaped to give them asymmetrical curves. It's an increasingly popular option in many parts of the country, especially for retail stores, commercial buildings, schools, and public buildings.

There is also a trend toward steeper slopes, a development that originated in the '80s and '90s. Flat and very low-slope roofs were the rage in the '60s and '70s, but the desire for buildings with more curb appeal has led many building owners and architects to conclude that steeper is better. And there's nothing to suggest that this trend won't continue to gain momentum.

In addition, some building owners eager to be design trendsetters are now opting for roof fascias that are overstated, extended, or molded to increase their dramatic appeal.

Value conscious end-users also are gravitating toward metal roofing products because they provide long years of reliable performance and ensure the best possible return on investment. Carbon steel, the dominant metal in commercial construction, is the most economical metal option, and features excellent structural characteristics. And, like other metals, it requires little maintenance, provides long service life, has a low life-cycle cost structure, and offers ample design flexibility.

To ensure life spans of 40 years or longer, sheet steel used for roofing is protected from the elements by aluminum-zinc, zinc, aluminum, or lead-tin alloy coatings. These coatings provide a continuous, impervious barrier that prevents moisture from contacting steel. And without direct moisture contact, steel cannot corrode.

The most common thickness of steel roofing used in commercial construction is 24-gauge, though 26-gauge is used on some occasions. (The lower the gauge number, the thicker the material.) In areas prone to hurricanes, 22-gauge steel with a .030 inches minimum thickness may be preferable.

Owners of high-end or historic buildings often favor softer metals such as copper, lead, and terne-coated stainless steel. These "crafted roofing" materials may be somewhat more expensive, but their life expectancies can be measured in centuries.

Titanium zinc, another of the so-called crafted metals, is just beginning to attract attention in the U.S. as it has in many parts of Europe. The soft, gray metal is available in different surface finishes, including pre-weathered, and comes in thicknesses of .7 mm and .8 mm. It never requires repainting or recoating and can provide virtually maintenance-free service for a century or more.

Another roofing material that is catching on with commercial and institutional building owners is architectural titanium. This attractive metal has a very low thermal coefficient and excellent strength, durability, and corrosion resistance. It typically comes in four-foot-wide, 28-gauge panels, but is also available in custom lengths.

For salt-water coastal environments, high-tensile aluminum has become a viable, cost-effective option. Aluminum can be easily painted, and various color finishes can be added inexpensively. Moreover, since the application of an aluminum roof is virtually identical to that of a steel roof, it is easy to find qualified contractors who can work with this metal.

The most common thickness for aluminum roofing is .032 inches, with .040 inches running a close second.

Metal Wall Systems

Many design and color options are also available with the various commercial metal wall panel systems on the market today. For example, pre-formed metal wall panels were once considered primarily for warehouse-type buildings, but they now offer dramatic architectural possibilities for all types of buildings. Color choices range from standard hues to customized blends, while textures run the gamut from smooth to something approaching stucco. Pre-formed wall panels come in a variety of profiles, including curved, to create distinctive reveals, shadow lines, and other architectural effects.

Another important metal cladding category features panels insulated by a foam core. These claddings were once considered for use primarily on cold-storage facilities, but are now used to add dramatic design to all types of commercial and institutional buildings. Insulated panels afford building owners and architects the opportunity to lower a building's initial construction costs, as well as energy and maintenance costs over the life of a building.

Metal Composite Systems

Owners and architects looking to make a design statement are also gravitating to a new generation of metal composite materials for their exterior cladding needs. These wall systems impart a high-tech image because

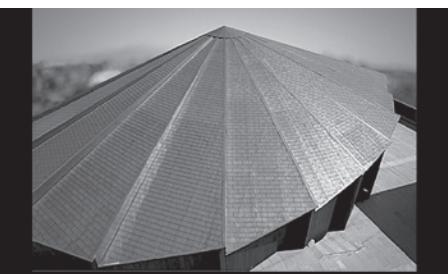


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Copper panels cover part of the exterior of Corgan Associates' new headquarters in Dallas. Corgan chose copper due to the metal's recyclable qualities coupled with its low-maintenance requirements and long life, making the material a key component used to meet high-performance building standards.

of their ability to be bent, curved, and joined together in an almost limitless number of geometric configurations. As a result, metal composite panels are installed on a wide variety of building types and building applications, ranging from large wall panel systems to cornices and canopies. They also are frequently used to join areas between other building materials, such as glass and pre-cast panels.

Introduced in North America nearly 30 years ago, metal composite materials were originally called aluminum composite materials. The name was recently changed to metal composite materials to reflect the introduction of new skin metals such as zinc, copper, stainless steel, and titanium. Aluminum, however, remains the predominant skin material.

Available in a variety of lengths and widths, metal composite material panels are formed by bonding two metal skins to a highly engineered plastic core that is placed between them. In effect, this creates a "sandwich" panel. The bonding process occurs under very precise conditions of temperature, pressure, and tension, resulting in a metal/plastic composite sheet that offers numerous advantages over a similar thickness of solid sheet metal.

PHOTO BY CHARLES DAVIS SMITH

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PROJECT: George Bush Intercontinental Airport | Houston, TX

ARCHITECT: PGAL | Houston, TX

**FABRICATOR/INSTALLER TEAM: Shaffner Heaney & Crown Corr
South Bend, IN & Gary, IN**

PRODUCT: ALPOLIC 4mm-fr core Custom Silver 78,000 sq.ft.

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Metal composite materials are among the most consistent and precise metal construction products available. For example, metal composite sheets are flat when manufactured, and they remain flat after installation. There is no "oil canning" or wrinkling because the skins are bonded to the core under tension, resulting in a balanced panel. And metal composite panels always have a consistent finish. Aluminum and steel composite materials can be finished in virtually any color. Conversely, natural materials such as zinc, copper, and titanium panels don't require a finish to protect them against the elements. New developments in paint application technology ensure that finishes applied to aluminum and steel are consistent from one panel to the next. This prevents the possibility of a building acquiring a checkerboard appearance.

Initial construction costs can often be reduced by using metal composite materials because these panels typically can be installed faster than alternative exteriors, such as pre-cast, granite, or brick. The lighter-weight metal composite panels also can save money by

reducing the amount of structural steel needed to support these claddings.

In addition, continuous improvements in paints and coatings have lowered maintenance costs. Today's metal composite panels retain their luster for decades, ensuring that buildings can maintain their aesthetic appeal and property value well into the future. That's especially important when it's time to sell because good-looking, well-maintained facility may not require expensive pre-sale refurbishing.

Properly designed and installed, metal composite panels provide a reliable building envelope that protects against air and water infiltration, and guards against the buildup of mold and mildew. These panels also are environmentally responsible and sustainable as evidenced by the fact that approximately 70 percent of an aluminum composite wall panel is manufactured from recycled content.

Troy Henson is the director of education and market development for the Metal Initiative, a national trade group that educates building owners, architects, and contractors about the use and selection of metal roofs and walls.

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Metal Takes Flight

Dallas Executive Airport's metallic exterior evokes the spirit of aviation

by TOY HENSON



WITH traffic at Love Field and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport at all-time highs, Dallas' business air travelers are finding an alternative to long lines and delays in the form of a renovated and expanded Dallas Executive Airport, formerly known as Redbird Airport.

Located just 6.5 miles from the Dallas central business district, the airport had undergone several major expansions since it was built in

1945, but none that rival the latest modernization effort completed in late 2005.

The \$8 million project, spearheaded by the architectural firm of GRW Willis of Arlington, involved the addition of a new tower and terminal/conference center with increased capacity to serve Dallas-area business travelers.

Brian Glass, AIA, GRW Willis' project architect, designed the spacious 4,000-square-foot

Dallas Executive Airport's luminescent metal facade was not only chosen for its aesthetic appeal, but also for its flexible and durable characteristics.

complex to include a "Texas-size" lounge with television and high-speed Internet access, a WSI weather center, a flight planning room, an exercise area, a snooze room, and shower facilities.



Touting a new terminal building and \$1.3 million control tower, the Dallas Executive Airport is one of the metro area's most robust aviation facilities. (below) The new control tower constructed on the west side of the airport encourages additional development in that vicinity.

The metallic exterior material for the terminal/conference center recalls the sleek aerodynamics of aircraft. The building's silhouette morphs as the viewer's position changes, evoking the spirit of flight. The terminal facade features 30,000 square feet of 4 mm aluminum composite panels with a bright silver metallic finish. Another 1,300 square feet of aluminum composite material in a bronze finish accent the

exterior. In addition, more than 4,000 square feet of 4 mm stainless steel composite panels cover the exterior wall of the control tower. The design team felt that the exterior finishes created an aesthetic character appropriate for an airport environment, reflective of aviation and the dynamics of flight—a setting where a metallic surface seemed in context.

The project also called for a contemporary exterior suggestive of corporate travel. "The owner wanted a look that played off the high-grade metallic look of the jets that fly into and out of the airport," Glass said. In addition, the all-metal facade system made of recycled material enabled the City of Dallas to seek

LEED certification for the airport tower and terminal. And while the city was prepared to pay a premium to obtain the look they wanted, Glass said, the bids for the metal systems were equal to or lower than those tendered for another composite system.

The new air traffic control tower meets FAA standards and makes a strong architectural statement serving as an emblem for the airport and integrating visually with the terminal. The

materials selected are identical to the materials used in the new general aviation terminal facility located across the airport runways from the control tower site.

Located just 250 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico, the renovated terminal and tower must withstand wide temperature swings, as well as heavy rains, severe thunderstorms, and blowing dust. To ensure a tight seal, the metal panel systems incorporate open joints with integral gaskets that don't require sealants or weather barriers. This, in turn, is expected to lower maintenance costs resulting from frequent cleaning and re-caulking, and ensure that the airport won't require additional exterior renovations for many years to come.

PROJECT Dallas Executive Airport Terminal, Dallas

CLIENT City of Dallas

ARCHITECT GRW Willis, Inc.

DESIGN TEAM Charles A. Willis, AIA; Brian Glass, AIA; R. Scott Ashton, Assoc. AIA

CONTRACTOR Meridian Commercial

CONSULTANTS Campos Engineers (MEP); Charles Gojer and Associates (structural); Engineering Installation Services (control tower equipment)

PHOTOGRAPHER Scott Womack

RESOURCES CONCRETE PAVEMENT: Bomanite; POROUS PAVING: Gravel Pave; FENCES, GATES, AND HARDWARE: INOX Rails; ARCHITECTURAL METAL WORK: Architectural Building Components; RAILINGS AND HANDRAILS: INOX Rails; METAL CEILINGS: Adams Campbell; ROOF AND WALL PANELS: Alcoa Architectural Products; FASCIA AND SOFFIT PANELS: Alcoa Architectural Products; ENTRANCES AND STOREFRONTS: EFCO Corp.; GLASS: Oldcastle; CONTROL TOWER GLASS: ACI; TILE: American Olean; TERRAZZO: American Terrazzo Co.; AWNINGS: Fabrotech



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Texas Projects Ranked Among 'America's Favorite Architecture'

Six Texas projects made the list of "America's Favorite Architecture," a public poll conducted and released in February by Harris Interactive and the AIA. Favorite Texas projects were the Texas State Capitol, Austin (92); American Airlines Center, Dallas (118); Pennzoil Place, Houston (132); Reliant Astrodome, Houston (134); Williams Tower, Houston (139); and University of Texas' Battle Hall, Austin (150). The poll to select the public's 150 favorite buildings was conducted in conjunction with the AIA's commemoration of its 150th anniversary. The Harris Interactive survey of 1,804 randomly selected Americans ranked America's Favorite Architecture from a list of 248 structures in numerous categories pre-selected by an AIA panel. For the complete list, visit www.aia150.org/SiteObjects/files/AIA150_building_list.pdf.

Corgan Architect Recognized by *Building Design & Construction*

Jonathan Massey, AIA, vice president of Corgan Associates of Dallas, has been recognized by *Building Design & Construction* as one of the nation's most outstanding young architects under the age of 40. Massey was selected for his leadership in the architecture field as well as his continuing dedication to community service. The second annual *Building Design & Construction* "40 Under 40" competition profiled the best and brightest young professionals in the AEC industry for their exceptional contributions in their profession and their community. Massey was selected from among 244 nominees worldwide and was the only architect named from Dallas/Fort Worth area. Honorees were announced in the January 2007 issue of *Building Design & Construction*.

Historic Preservation and Green Building Leaders Find Common Ground

There is a growing desire within the historic preservation and green building communities to align their agendas. Participants in the Greening of Historic Properties National Summit in Pittsburgh in October 2006 contributed to a ground-breaking white paper that is currently circulating as a draft among the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), and the leadership of AIA. The white paper, *Pinpointing Strategies and Tactics for Integrating Green Building Technologies into Historic Structures*, explores how green building initiatives have challenged existing historic preservation standards with new approaches to building reuse, restorations, materials selection, and system retrofits. It is hoped that the outcomes and recommendations from the Greening of Historic Properties National Summit – which are detailed in the white paper – could be embraced by both the United States Green Building Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and subsequently be applied to projects by members of these groups, as well as by the general public. This initiative comes on the heels of an increased focus on sustainability by the Association for Preservation Technology International and USGBC's interest in applying its LEED(R) Rating System to historic properties. The white paper is available as a PDF at www.gba.org/GreenHistoric.pdf.

NRCA Introduces Online Wind-Load Calculator

The National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA), in cooperation with the Midwest Roofing Contractors Association and North/East Roofing Contractors Association, launched its online wind-load calculator, Roof Wind Designer, in February. The calculator accurately determines roof systems' design wind loads for common building types and allows users to input information about a specific building and roof area. It then determines the basic wind speed for the geographic region and provides a detailed wind load report. The calculator is available for free with user registration at www.roofwinddesigner.com.

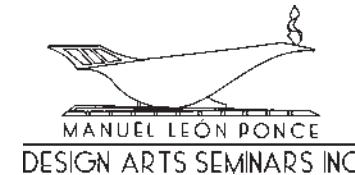
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Texas Parks and Wildlife Project Recognized by AISC

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Government Canyon State Natural Area Visitor Center earned national recognition in the 2006 Innovative Design in Engineering and Architecture with Structural Steel awards program (IDEAS2) conducted annually by the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC). The program recognizes outstanding achievements in engineering and architecture on structural steel projects around the country. Project design team members include Lake/Flato Architects and Architectural Engineers Collaborative. Projects are judged on their use of structural steel, with an emphasis on creative solutions to project requirements, design innovation, aesthetic and visual impact, innovative use of architecturally exposed structural steel, technical or architectural advances in the use of steel, and innovative design and construction methods. Based on constructed value, projects are awarded in three categories: projects less than \$15 million, projects \$15-75 million, and projects \$75 million or greater. Government Canyon was presented the Merit Award in the category of projects less than \$15 million, making it one of only three in the country to earn an award in this classification. Located 20 miles northwest of San Antonio, the Government Canyon visitor center utilizes steel pipe with built-up pipe trusses allowing for a dramatic 60-foot diagonal, free-span butterfly roof. IDEAS2 jurors noted, "Government Canyon is a highly creative use of structural steel—the project shows the inherent capability of steel to express the lightness of framing, while capturing the Texas cultural building heritage of practical elegance and efficiency." Government Canyon was one of 11 projects recognized by AISC and was chosen from more than 70 submissions.

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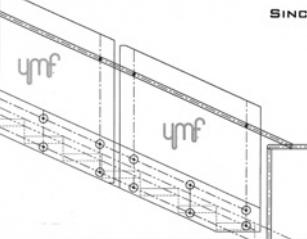
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An early conceptual drawing of the plaza helped team members generate ideas for the future public space.

Last November the Lubbock City Council provided substantial momentum to the project by earmarking \$750,000 for right-of-way improvements and outdoor public space in the Mercado. Two charrettes are planned and will be staffed by dozens of AIA Lubbock volunteers to work with members of the neighborhoods on envisioning a public facility that responds to the residents' expectations. In April, after the design team has incorporated the information from the charrettes into a final concept, a third session will allow residents an additional opportunity to comment on the design. Then, in early May, a final document will be presented to the City of Lubbock as the chapter's gift in commemoration of AIA 150 during National Architecture Week.

Members of AIA Lubbock have teamed with four students from the Texas Tech University College of Architecture to design the Mercado. The students are Martin Aguirre, Jennifer Harrington, Chris Plyler and Adam Ruelas. The design team is receiving guidance not only from the charrettes themselves, but also from a terrific steering committee of allied design professionals, civic leaders, and community representatives. In addition, the team has studied four successful projects in other cities.

As outlined in a preliminary report, the design team recognizes the need for representation of Hispanic culture throughout the design and the hiring of contractors and subcontractors from within the north Lubbock community. Recommendations for specifically programmed architectural components include small stages, bandshells, and performance areas for public and private celebrations; outdoor plazas with seating, small kiosk retail, and public artwork or water features; garden spaces with adjacent shade structures; and bike trails that link the Mercado with the Texas Tech campus.

The North University Avenue Mercado promises to be a catalyst for positive growth in a part of Lubbock that has suffered from a recent lack of development. The volunteers on this project hope to develop a design that will engender vibrancy, growth, and a sense of pride in north Lubbock that will last for years to come.

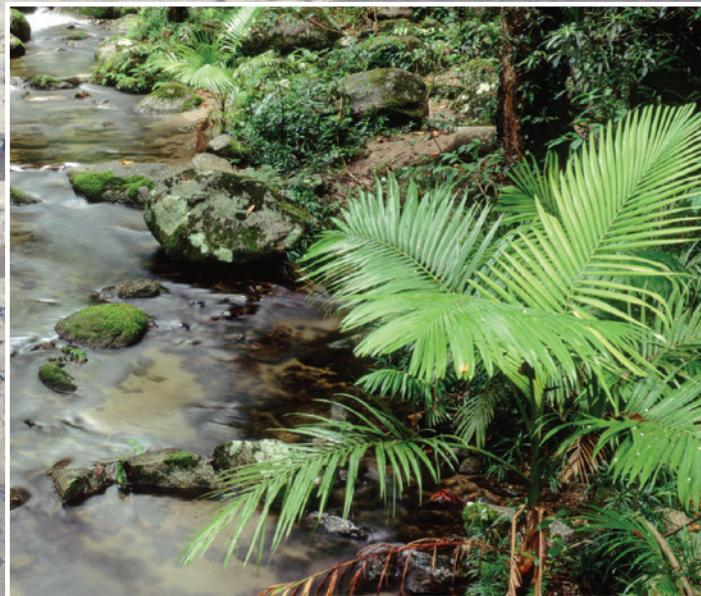
The writer is AIA Lubbock's designated AIA 150 "champion."

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